

**COED COMBAT  
UNITS?**  
MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS

# the weekly Standard

FEBRUARY 4, 2013

\$4.95



## THE SENSITIVITY APPARAT

MARK HEMINGWAY  
on the scourge  
of 'human rights' commissions

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February 4, 2013 • Volume 18, Number 20



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COVER BY DAVE MALAN

## Our Robed Friends

Federal courts no longer check federal power. That's been the disappointing truth of contemporary America, culminating in the Supreme Court's timorous ruling upholding Obamacare last year. But 2013 could be very different. The first month of the year saw a number of cases that suggest the judicial branch might again start doing the job James Madison tasked it with over two centuries ago.

The nation's most important federal appeals court foiled two government power grabs on January 25. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that the president violated the Constitution in making three recess appointments to the National Labor Relations Board while the Senate was not actually in recess. And a different three-judge panel concluded that part of the Environmental Protection Agency's rules requiring refineries to use biofuels went "in excess of the agency's statutory authority."

Add an anti-IRS ruling the week before—these things come in threes, it seems—and THE SCRAPBOOK is almost ready to allow that America is not going to hell in a handbasket. Almost. Because no case is certain until the Supreme Court has its say.

Still, there's much cause for celebra-

tion in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia's decision in *Loving v. IRS* that licensing requirements the IRS developed in 2011 constituted "an invalid regulatory regime" that would threaten the livelihood of independent tax preparers. Judge James Boasberg didn't even need to hear oral arguments to rule for the Institute for Justice and the three preparers it represents, ordering an immediate halt to the IRS program. He agreed with IJ attorney Dan Alban, who says simply, "Congress never gave the IRS the authority to license tax preparers, and the IRS can't give itself that power."

But the IRS last week submitted a motion to stay the injunction. This last-ditch effort confirms the agency's primary goal here is to enrich itself—and friendly special interests. The arguments of the Obama functionaries on behalf of the IRS are comically weak. The IRS maintains that its new licensing requirements—tax preparers would have to pay user fees, take an exam, complete continuing education annually, and obtain IRS permission to practice—should stand because they've proven so profitable, with "almost \$4 million more in user fees this month alone" and over \$100 million

in total. The agency complains it has put \$50 million into launching the program and would have to spend \$238,000—nearly a quarter of a million dollars!—to notify preparers that the regulations are illegal.

Imagine the reaction if a private corporation asked a federal court to let it continue breaking the law so it could keep extracting millions of dollars from hapless consumers.

The IRS also cited in its brief a press release in which the makers of TurboTax declared "disappointment" in the decision. Did the young DoJ attorney writing that line do so with a straight face? TurboTax is not subject to the new regulations. Neither are attorneys and CPAs, or the employees they supervise. Of course TurboTax (and H&R Block, Jackson Hewitt, et al.) is disappointed: These onerous requirements raised the bar to entry in a \$9 billion tax-return preparation industry. Former H&R Block CEO Mark Ernst, who left the company after it lost over a billion thanks to subprime mortgages, oversaw the writing of the new rules.

THE SCRAPBOOK hopes the clear-headed Judge Boasberg, an Obama appointee, stands his constitutional ground. ♦

## Light-Fingered Obama

As good as President Obama is at blaming others, he's just as egregious at failing to give people credit when he uses their thoughts in a speech. The prime example: his second Inaugural Address delivered last week.

One of his favorite tropes in the speech was to begin a new idea with "We, the people." He did this five times. He used it to introduce the notion that "every citizen deserves a basic measure of security and dignity." And he invoked it again to insist that we "still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves,

but to all posterity." And so on. This came straight out of Reagan's State of the Union address in 1987—or at least emulated the manner in which Reagan used "We, the people" in his speech. Reagan, who had excellent speechwriters, used the trope five times.

The other victim of Obama's pilferage was Abraham Lincoln, the president with whom Obama likes to identify himself. He swore his oath of office on Lincoln's Bible and scheduled his State of the Union address on February 12, Lincoln's birthday. Obama was asked recently if he'd experienced a "Lincoln moment." Now he has.

Obama said: "Through blood drawn by lash and blood drawn by

sword, we learned that no union founded on the principles of liberty and equality could survive half-slave and half-free." Notice how close this is to Lincoln's second inaugural, in which he said, "Yet, if God wills that it continue until . . . every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword . . ."

That wasn't all. An Obama passage expressed the same thought as expressed in Lincoln's message to Congress on the Emancipation Proclamation. Obama declared: "We have always understood that when times change, so must we, that fidelity to our founding principles requires new responses to new challenges." Lincoln,



not surprisingly, said it better: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.”

Obama also lifted from the Gettysburg Address, but you get the picture. His artlessness was exposed in the *Wall Street Journal* by Karl Rove, former adviser to George W. Bush, and by Mona Charen in *National Review*. The effect of poaching from Lincoln, Charen wrote, “was like inserting snatches of Mozart into a Mariah Carey song.” ♦

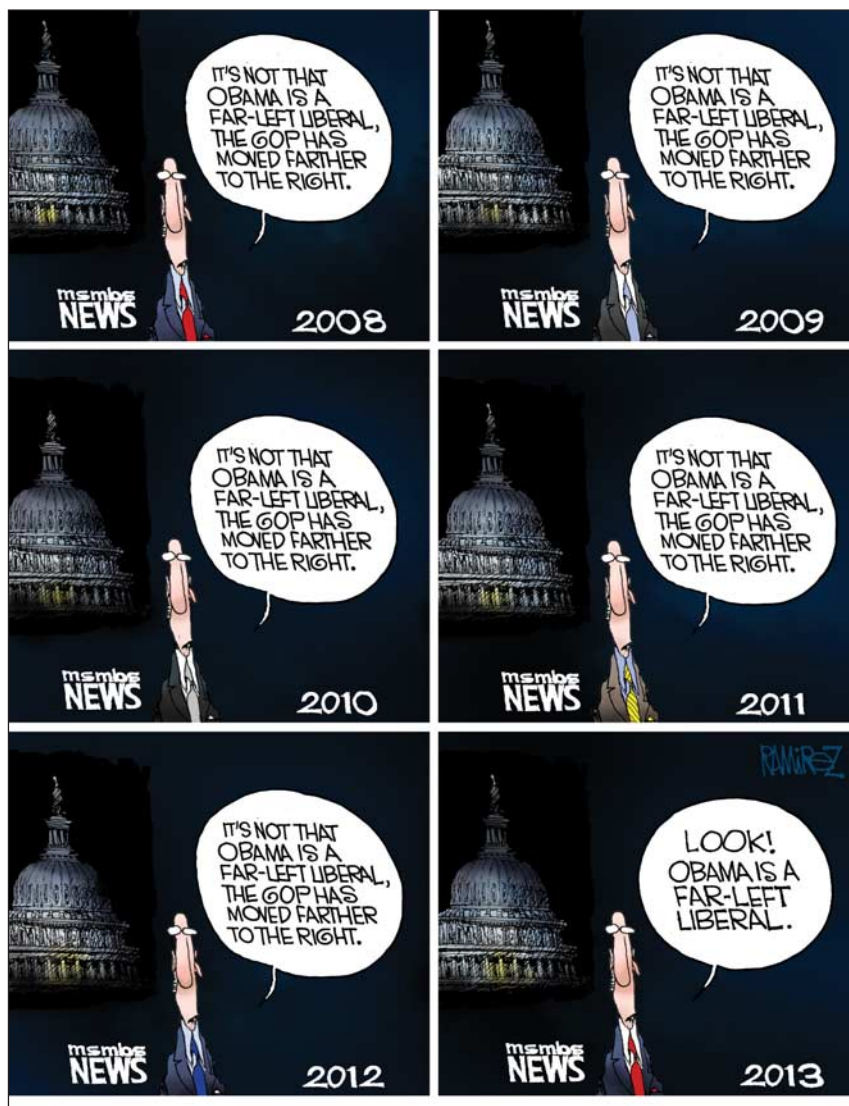
## What We Saw at the Inauguration

Thousands of patriots trekked to Washington not to witness the inauguration, but to be of service. These volunteers weren’t paid for waiting on those who ponied up for the evening balls, but they had the satisfaction of knowing they helped make history—by, for instance, ferrying journalists to the restroom.

One, we sheepishly admit, was THE SCRAPBOOK. President Obama’s special relationship with the media had us looking forward to enjoying the official inaugural ball from the special press section. Hotel California would have been a better name: Once you were in, you couldn’t leave.

Should reporters need to use the facilities, the Presidential Inaugural Committee allotted volunteers to escort us. Just as if we were visiting, say, North Korea. The bathroom was only 200 feet from the media prison—errr, playpen—but our escort, a retired businesswoman, waited patiently outside. Then we needed a drink. She steered us away from a nearby bartender, explaining she had a better connection.

She certainly did. The bartender added a complimentary glass of wine to the order—which was promptly consumed by our escort. Other journalists attempted to secure drinks, but were denied by their escorts. Our generous tipping was paying dividends, much as buying “insurance” from organized crime does. Crony capitalism is the Chicago way. And for the next



four years, it will continue to be the Washington way. ♦

## Hipster Marxism

Since applied Marxism is responsible for 100 million or so corpses over the last century, it’s hard to imagine an ideology more worthy of scorn. But hipsters didn’t get the memo. Radical chic is alive and well in—where else?—Brooklyn. Naturally, the *New York Times* is eager to report on this exciting development.

For the sake of brevity, we’ll sum up the *Times*’s profile of 23-year-old Bhaskar Sunkara. He was raised in Westchester County, one of the country’s wealthiest suburbs. He attended

the George Washington University, ranked as America’s most expensive college while he was there. After college, he settled in Bedford-Stuyvesant, founding the country’s most exciting neo-Marxist journal, *Jacobin*, which recently published a “radical analysis of the *Onion*’s online reality-television satire ‘Sex House’” and is named after a movement whose signature achievement was the Reign of Terror. Naturally, all this merits glowing coverage by the *Times*, even though *Jacobin* doesn’t have enough subscribers to fill a minor league baseball stadium.

Sunkara, you’ll be pleased to hear, has book deals now and makes regular appearances on MSNBC, so he seems to be getting what he wants out of life.

But how is this supposed to help the masses? We don't know, and we doubt Sunkara has a clue either, though he does seem desperate for attention:

When Seth Ackerman, a graduate student at Cornell University, turned in a scathing analysis of the Constitution's inherent conservatism for the second issue, Mr. Sunkara knew it needed something to really pop. "Seth had a title with nine words and a semicolon," he recalled. "I crossed it out and wrote 'Burn the Constitution.'"

Sunkara hasn't figured out yet that the only reason a rump Marxism survives in America is that soporific academics have done their best to obscure what it's really about. Still, Sunkara is managing to fool some of the people some of the time:

Mr. Sunkara also plans to keep writing for *Vice* magazine, where he has compared outrage over rich professional athletes to outrage over "overpaid" public-sector employees, all of whom he sees as just trying to negotiate their fair share. That time, Mr. Sunkara's editor wrote the headline, the *Vice*-like "Jeremy Lin Is Not Greedy, You're Just Stupid." But when it comes to *Jacobin*'s goal of smuggling radical analysis out of the intellectual ghetto and into the mainstream Mr. Sunkara's motto seems to be: by any means necessary. It helps, he said, "that liberals think we are relatively sane."

If mainstream liberals start to embrace Marxism again, that hardly means Sunkara is sane. It might, however, prove they're stupid. ♦

## Unhappy Anniversary

*Roe v. Wade* turned 40 last week, and we were finally greeted with some bracing honesty from those arguing for abortion on demand. But if *Salon*'s Mary Elizabeth Williams is to be commended for her honesty, it must be said her forthright argument is chilling. How's this for a headline: "So what if abortion ends life?" She writes:

We make choices about life all the time in our country. We make them about men and women in other nations. We make them about prisoners in our penal system. We make them about patients with terminal illnesses and

accident victims. We still have passionate debates about the justifications of our actions as a society, but we don't have to do it while being bullied around by the vague idea that if you say we're talking about human life, then the jig is up, rights-wise.

It seems absurd to suggest that the only thing that makes us fully human is the short ride out of some lady's vagina.

Some 54 million abortions have been performed in this country since *Roe v. Wade*. While it may be a banal decision at a Planned Parenthood clinic, it's exceedingly rare to find Americans standing in judgment of the innocent elsewhere. Outside of abortion, the vast majority of "choices about life" we make are how to preserve, protect, and defend it.

In fact, one of the main things that sets abortion apart is that "we" never made a choice about it—nine unelected Supreme Court justices did. Even Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has called *Roe v. Wade* "heavy-handed judicial intervention [that] was difficult to justify and appears to have provoked, not resolved, conflict."

Further, the notion that it's "absurd to suggest that the only thing that makes us fully human is the short ride out of some lady's vagina" is itself absurd. In America that "short ride" does make you a natural-born citizen, which confers upon you certain rights.

If you're now wondering how far Williams is willing to go to justify abortion, know that she's willing to reject wholesale the founding principle of America. "The complicated reality in which we live: All life is not equal," she writes.

You've heard this before, but in an age of legally sanctioned abortion it bears repeating: "All men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." In the face of such conviction, Williams can only shrug and say "So what?" The Founders in their wisdom also ensured our unalienable rights would include freedom of expression, up to and including, as we see these days, the forthright advocacy of barbarism. ♦

## the weekly Standard

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit [www.weeklystandard.com](http://www.weeklystandard.com) or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2012, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



## Is It Me You're Looking For?

In the 1986 movie *Ruthless People*, the character played by Danny DeVito answers the phone, responding, “Yeah, Debbie’s here, who’s this? Well, Ralph, uh, Debbie can’t talk right now. . . . How about if I have her call you back later when I’m done?” He then hangs up and says with a sinister grin, “I love wrong numbers.”

I once witnessed a friend tell the person on the other end of a wrong number that the man’s girlfriend was “upstairs in the club,” hanging out with all the guys, and that she refused to talk to him. (We were actually in my friend’s backyard, and the caller was severely intoxicated.)

Now, I’ve never pulled either of those pranks, but the opportunity does present itself each and every week—that is how often I get misdialed. My number consists of three digits in a repetitive series. I chose it for a simple reason: My cell number should be one that’s easy to remember because I’ve got too many other things to memorize.

And it’s not just me. We all seem to be memorizing, more than ever, bits of information that do nothing to enrich our lives: usernames, passwords, and PIN numbers to access not only the Internet, but also our offices, computers at home and at work, and smartphones. Making matters worse, cyber experts tell us it’s best to devise different sets of passwords and PINs in order to better guarantee our security.

Every now and then, we are asked to reset our passwords, followed by a series of security questions. What was the name of your high school sophomore year homeroom teacher? How about the team name of your middle school? (We were the Trojans, which is fine if you’re USC, but not if you’re

a Catholic institution—the team was eventually renamed the Spartans to avoid further ribbing, so to speak.) Occasionally, an onscreen icon will rate your new password or PIN—mine seem to be highly vulnerable until I add even more letters and digits.

To deal with this information overload, I chose a listing that just rolls off the tongue. “Great number,” I’ve often been told. Unfortunately, it’s also too easy to mis-



take for others. I’ve checked for messages and heard the voice of an elderly woman wondering why she hasn’t been picked up for the last two hours. Sometimes the messages are in foreign languages. Georgetown University Hospital called to have a patient reschedule her procedure. For several days Sears Home Services kept calling because of a repair problem at someone else’s house.

I try my best to return these calls. It took a chunk of my time to reach the hospital (and I have no idea if that old lady was ever picked up). Twice a local television station rang me, looking for someone at the Family Research Council. And once New

York congressman Peter King left me a voicemail message saying I needed to call him back about some unfinished business.

And yet my predicament could be so much worse. In 1982, one-hit wonder Tommy Tutone came out with the hit song “Jenny (867-5309).” It’s a catchy tune, and the number resonates with you. The urban legend-debunking website Snopes.com confirms that the song “caused nothing but grief for telephone customers unlucky enough to have that combination of numbers as their own.”

Last year the *Akron Beacon Journal* caught up with the Shambarger family, who owned the local 867-5309 some 30 years ago. “It started out as an isolated phone call here and there,” Charles Shambarger told the newspaper. “We’d get a phone call: ‘Is Jenny there?’ I’d say, ‘No, I’m sorry, you have the wrong number.’

Maybe a couple of nights later, I’d get another phone call: ‘Is Jenny there?’” According to reporter Mark J. Price, “The phone began to ring at different times of the day and night. Most callers sounded young and had rock music playing in the background. They often laughed before hanging up.” The family finally caved and changed their number.

In 1999, two girls at Brown University had the unfortunate listing. “It’s so annoying,” one of them complained to the *Brown Daily Herald*. “It’s the worst number to have in the world.” The *Herald* added that “some ask for Jenny, some play the Tommy Tutone song on the girls’ answering machine, and some males even leave their phone numbers in the hopes of finding a date.”

I can relate—several times a week I receive phone calls from a woman asking me to take her out on a date. I’ve been tempted to tell her I’m hanging out “upstairs in the club” with all the girls, but something tells me my wife wouldn’t find that amusing.

VICTORINO MATUS



# The Audacity of Nope

President Obama has gone on the offensive at the beginning of his second term, and Republicans aren't happy campers. Of course, every Republican camp is unhappy in its own way.

There are the lamenters. Shouldn't Obama have been less partisan in his Inaugural Address? Who gave liberals the right to launch ideological offensives? Doesn't Obama know this is a center-right country? Didn't he learn any lessons from Bill Clinton? Beneath these rhetorical questions, of course, lurks the fear that Obama will succeed.

But he won't. There's no need to worry that Barack Obama will be a liberal Ronald Reagan. Reagan's foreign and economic policies succeeded. Obama's policies are failing, at home and abroad.

But will the public notice? This is the concern of the second camp, the despairers. Liberals will continue to get away with shortsighted policies, they think, because the American public that reelected Obama is demographically different from in the good old days; also, there are now more takers than makers; what's more, voters today are moved only by their short-term comfort rather than by their self-interest properly understood. So Obama will get away with it, the GOP is finished, and America's doomed.

Not so. Against a candidate who ran an exceedingly unimaginative campaign, Barack Obama won just over 51 percent of the vote. He's no FDR, and today's public actually shows considerable resistance to being seduced by the siren song of contemporary liberalism.

On the other hand, the public isn't enraptured by some of the conservative Republicans they see—which leads us to the third GOP camp, the kamikazes. Real men, they think, march off cliffs. Real political parties bull straight ahead—even if their offensive line is too small and too slow. Real politicians scoff when one of their colleagues urges them not to be stupid. Stupid people deserve representation too, after all.

Actually, they do. But they can be represented by less-stupid leaders. And those leaders don't have to fall into the fourth camp, the accommodators. Last week, the Obama administration announced a startlingly irresponsible decision to send women into ground combat units. Rather than make the case against this based on the realities of biology,

psychology, and sociology, rather than stepping up to defend the military and to defend women, leading Republican senators, shellshocked by the success of last fall's "war on women" gambit, rushed to announce their support, or slunk away in quiet acquiescence.

This is foolish and pathetic. What self-respecting person wants to join such a party?

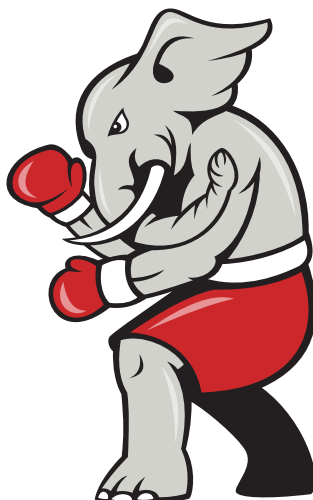
So what's to be done? Here's the outline of a three-step program.

The first is to remember the words of Pope John Paul II: Be not afraid. The odds against Republicans and conservatives have been much worse in the past. A little courage now would go a long way.

The second step is to recall Bill Buckley's famous words, at the founding of *National Review*. The magazine—and by implication the conservative movement—would "stand athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it." A little willingness on the part of Republicans to sometimes stand athwart History would also go a long way.

The third step is to fight. The fights won't all succeed. The opprobrium that will be heaped upon Republicans who dare to engage in some of them—like opposing women in combat—will be daunting. But as Leo Strauss wrote in a letter to *National Review* just a year after its founding: "A conservative, I take it, is a man who despises vulgarity; but the argument which is concerned exclusively with calculations of success, and is based on blindness to the nobility of the effort, is vulgar." Even in our modern mass democracy, the Republican party—even or especially a healthily populist Republican party—could surely strive occasionally to rise above the merely vulgar. In the same letter, Strauss praised political Zionism: "I can never forget what it achieved as a moral force in an era of complete dissolution. It helped stem the tide of 'progressive' leveling." Even in Obama's America, the Republican party could sometimes dare to stand as a moral force.

Of course it's not enough to be unafraid. It's not enough to stand athwart history. It's not enough to fight. There needs to be fresh thinking and a positive governing agenda. But it's evident from the first week of President Obama's



second term that Republican recovery will begin with a willingness to say No to President Obama—no to the nanny state at home, no to dishonorable retreat abroad.

Will Republicans have the spirit and the nerve to embrace the Audacity of Nope?

—William Kristol

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# Hillary Bobs and Weaves



**H**illary Clinton's testimony last week on Benghazi was in many respects a fitting end to the multi-layered scandal that seems unlikely ever to grow beyond scandal childhood, at least in the minds of those responsible for determining what is and is not scandalous in Washington.

Clinton's testimony at two hearings—before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Wednesday morning and the House Foreign Affairs Committee in the afternoon—was notable for its inconsistencies, misleading claims, buck-passing, and incomplete answers. But few in the national media seemed to notice—or care. Perhaps reporters who had managed for months to avoid in-depth coverage of Benghazi and its many permutations simply weren't familiar enough with the subject matter to recognize even the obvious problems with what Clinton said. And there were many, many problems.

At times, Clinton depicted herself as a hands-on secretary of state, directly involved in the details of Libya policy before the attacks and the decision-making during and after them. She explained that she was notified of the attack in Benghazi "shortly after 4 P.M." and after that was "in continuous meetings and conversations both within the department, with our team in Tripoli, with the interagency, and

internationally." She testified that she'd spoken several times to National Security Adviser Tom Donilon, among others, including CIA director David Petraeus, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey, the chargé d'affaires in Tripoli, the president of the Libyan National Congress, and top intelligence and Pentagon officials. "We were going over every possible option, reviewing all that was available to us, any actions we could take."

She defended the administration's policies with the authority of someone who was at the table as they were shaped and spoke with assurance about the steps the U.S. government is taking to counter al Qaeda and its affiliates.

At other times, though, Clinton's descriptions of her involvement made her sound like someone entirely outside the Libya decision-making team. Clinton testified that she never saw any of the numerous appeals for additional security that State Department officials in Libya made to Washington. "I didn't see those requests. They didn't come to me. I didn't approve them, I didn't deny them."

And what about the administration's account of what happened? Clinton suggested that she had virtually nothing to do with the administration's public explanation of the attacks that took the life of a U.S. ambassador for the first time since 1979.

Clinton testified that she did not pick Susan Rice, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to appear on the Sunday talk shows on September 16. When Senator Jeff Flake asked if she was consulted about that choice, she answered, "No." When Flake invited her to describe some of the conversations in the administration surrounding the information Rice presented, Clinton responded: "I cannot speak to any conversation I specifically had, because the conversations were ongoing before and after Ambassador Rice's appearance on the Sunday talk shows." Indeed, she told the senators that she had nothing to do with the misleading talking points. "I would say that personally I was not focused on talking points," she claimed.

And why didn't Clinton herself take the opportunity to inform the American public about the attacks on State Department property and personnel? "Going on the Sunday shows is not my favorite thing to do," she explained. "There are other things I prefer to do on Sunday mornings, and you know, I haven't been on a Sunday show in way over a year. So it just isn't something I normally jump to do."

Even if Clinton didn't help put together the talking points, she defended Rice and her erroneous claims. "I certainly did not know of any reports that contradicted the IC [intelligence community] talking points at the time Ambassador Rice went on the TV shows."

That seems unlikely. Emails among Obama administration national security officials as early as the evening of September 11 reported that Ansar al Sharia had claimed responsibility for the attack. A cable from the CIA station chief in Libya on September 12 indicated that the attacks

NEWS.COM



were likely carried out by terrorists, not a group of protesters angry about a film. Mohamed Magariaf, the president of the Libyan National Congress, whom Clinton testified she consulted after the attacks, would dismiss claims about the video and protests as “unfounded and preposterous.”

Although Clinton says she never saw reports contradicting Rice’s version of events, she testified that she was careful never to blame the video for the attacks in Benghazi. “With respect to the video, I did not say that it was video from—that it was about the video for Libya. It certainly was for many of the other places we were watching these disturbances.”

That’s parsing that would make even her husband blush. In a statement she put out on the evening of September 11—“Statement by Secretary Clinton on the Attack in Benghazi”—she denounced the assault and the video. “I condemn in the strongest terms the attack on our mission in Benghazi today. . . . Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet. The United States deplores any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others.”

Three days later, at the solemn ceremony for the arrival of the caskets of the slain Americans, she said: “This has been a difficult week for the State Department and for our country. We’ve seen the heavy assault on our post in Benghazi that took the lives of those brave men. We’ve seen rage and violence directed at American embassies over an awful Internet video that we had nothing to do with. It is hard for the American people to make sense of that because it is senseless, and it is totally unacceptable.”

Clinton’s current position, if we take her literally, seems to be that the protests and attacks on our embassies throughout the region came in response to the video, but the attack in Benghazi did not. Let’s take Clinton’s parsing at face value and assume that she intended to separate the Benghazi attacks from the violence elsewhere triggered by the video. If she wasn’t linking the attacks in Libya to the video, she was one of the only Obama officials who didn’t do so. Why? By her own account, she hadn’t seen any of the reporting that contradicted the administration’s early claims about those attacks—made by everyone from Susan Rice to Barack Obama.

It seems unlikely that we’ll get answers to these questions. The establishment media coverage of Clinton’s testimony ranged from fawning to fulsome. CNN’s Soledad O’Brien apparently wasn’t bothered by Clinton’s inconsistencies, but she excoriated Senator Ron Johnson for having the audacity to ask about them. NBC News summarized her appearance this way: “Speaking of Clinton’s performance, all of her political strengths were on display. She was prepared. She was tough when she needed to be. She was deferential when she wanted to be. And she displayed both raw emotion and a sense of humor. It’s also worth noting that she’s stronger today—politically—than she was four years

ago. . . . But politically, her performance yesterday is enough to quiet any nervous Nellies in the Democratic party that she isn’t ready for what will inevitably be a rough and tumble campaign should she embark on it.”

But before we put the Benghazi story to bed, it’s worth noting that Republicans in Congress are not satisfied, and many of them are angry. The administration, its claims of transparency notwithstanding, has refused to provide congressional oversight committees with many of the documents they requested. In particular, the White House has told congressional investigators that it will not provide any documents related to the drafting and editing of the much-disputed “talking points,” despite the fact that the administration has offered five different explanations of how those talking points were put together, then changed to omit references to al Qaeda.

The media may not have much interest, but confirmation hearings for John Brennan, the president’s nominee to head the CIA, will soon provide senators an opportunity to grill him about the administration’s inconsistencies and continuing lack of transparency. If they use it well, the Benghazi scandal may yet grow to adolescence. Either way, Republicans owe it to the public, and particularly the families of the deceased, to demand answers.

—Stephen F. Hayes

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# The Obama Vacuum



*Scene of the crime: the Algerian natural gas facility*

One thing Hillary Clinton got right in her testimony before Congress last week: “When America is absent,” she said, “there are consequences.” But the administration she served has chosen to be absent, and we are seeing the consequences play out, from North Africa to the Levant, where the unchecked flow of

weapons, experienced jihadist fighters, and Salafist ideology is reshaping the regional balance of power—and tilting it against the United States.

There was no forceful response to the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operation in September that murdered four Americans at the Benghazi consulate. That may help explain why an AQIM splinter group was emboldened to take Western hostages, including seven Americans, at a natural gas facility in the Algerian desert earlier this month. After all, if the administration does not hold itself accountable—“what difference, at this point, does it make?” Clinton said, regarding whether or not the Benghazi attack was a terrorist operation—how can U.S. adversaries know they will pay a price when they kill Americans?

Obama’s desire to disengage from the Middle East was driven at first by his politically useful cartoon version of Bush’s Iraq, a “quagmire” that he wished to avoid at all costs. But now, at the beginning of his second term, Obama seems to fear U.S. intervention of any kind. Indeed, his administration’s reluctance to do any follow-up work in Libya after the initial bombing left a weak, democratically elected, non-Islamist Libyan government to fend for itself, which has produced a region-wide catastrophe.

Some of Qaddafi’s arsenal of NATO-quality small arms has made its way into Hamas’s hands in Gaza via Iranian-established smuggling routes. Some of those weapons are also winding up in Syria, as have hardened Libyan Islamists fighting alongside other foreign militants in the war to bring down Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. It is certainly in the interests of the United States to see Iran’s key Arab ally toppled. But there is no reason to have provided the global jihad movement with another platform for its activity. It should not have been difficult for the White House to figure out that without American leadership, regional Sunni allies like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar would resort to their traditional fallback position—enlisting Islamist fighters, from the Muslim Brotherhood to al Qaeda, to defeat Assad.

In North Africa, post-Qaddafi Libya casts an even darker shadow. After Qaddafi’s downfall, his Tuareg legions took their weapons to Mali to make war on the central government and liberate “Azawad,” their homeland in northern Mali. The Tuareg nationalists have fought sometimes against and sometimes with various Islamist groups, including Ansar al-Din, whose advance into central Mali compelled France to land troops earlier this month. Other Islamist factions are also active, especially AQIM, which now controls parts of northern Mali, including Timbuktu.

It was an AQIM splinter group, Those Who Sign with Blood, that claimed responsibility for the operation in Algeria that left 23 hostages dead. Comprising mostly Tunisian, Libyan, and Egyptian fighters, the group was ostensibly retaliating for the Western incursion into Mali, but it entered Algeria from across the Libyan border.

“The Arab revolutions,” Clinton told the Senate committee, “shattered security forces across the region.” This point has so unnerved a White House that wants to keep its hands clean of the Middle East that it is looking for some way to turn back the clock and reempower those security forces. In Syria, for instance, administration officials call for the preservation of “state institutions,” including the notoriously brutal security services. However, the entire point of the uprising in Syria is to dismantle Assad’s security regime once and for all.

Indeed, two years into the Arab revolutions, it is perhaps most accurate to understand the uprisings across the region not as fights against corruption or struggles for dignity or democracy. Rather, the Arab Spring is a series of astonishingly successful battles against Arab security services. If the White House believes that the era of the all-powerful *mukhabarat* represents a golden age of regional stability, then it is worth looking a little more closely at the hostage-taking in Algeria earlier this month.

No one could have been surprised when Algerian security forces laid siege to the terrorists at the oil facility, apparently making little distinction between the terrorists and the foreign nationals held hostage. It was this typically hamfisted approach that, between the government and their Islamist rivals, was responsible for more than 100,000 dead during Algeria’s decade-long civil war in the 1990s. What both sides learned was that killing Algerian civilians alienates the general population. Thus, the first thing the terrorists did was release all the Algerian nationals, leaving only foreigners, whom neither the terrorists nor Algerian security forces cared much if they killed.

Oddly, the Algerian government, run by a cadre of generals, has earned mostly positive reviews from Western journalists and analysts for its performance—as if refusing to negotiate with terrorists were in itself a sufficient strategy. The White House, at least publicly, has muted any criticisms it might have, even though Algiers embarked on its “rescue” mission without consulting Washington or any other foreign capital whose citizens were taken.

Among other reasons for its silence, the Obama administration wants help from Algeria in Mali. It is unlikely to receive it, however, because the regime in Algiers cares only for its own stability, not regional stability. Algeria is little concerned that some of the Polisario fighters it supports in the Western Sahara have found their way into AQIM units fighting in Mali. The point is to keep their own realm secure regardless of the instability they create elsewhere. The vacuum that the Obama administration has left in the region, from Libya to Syria, is not going to be filled by Arab security services like Algeria’s. Instead, they are a large part of the problem.

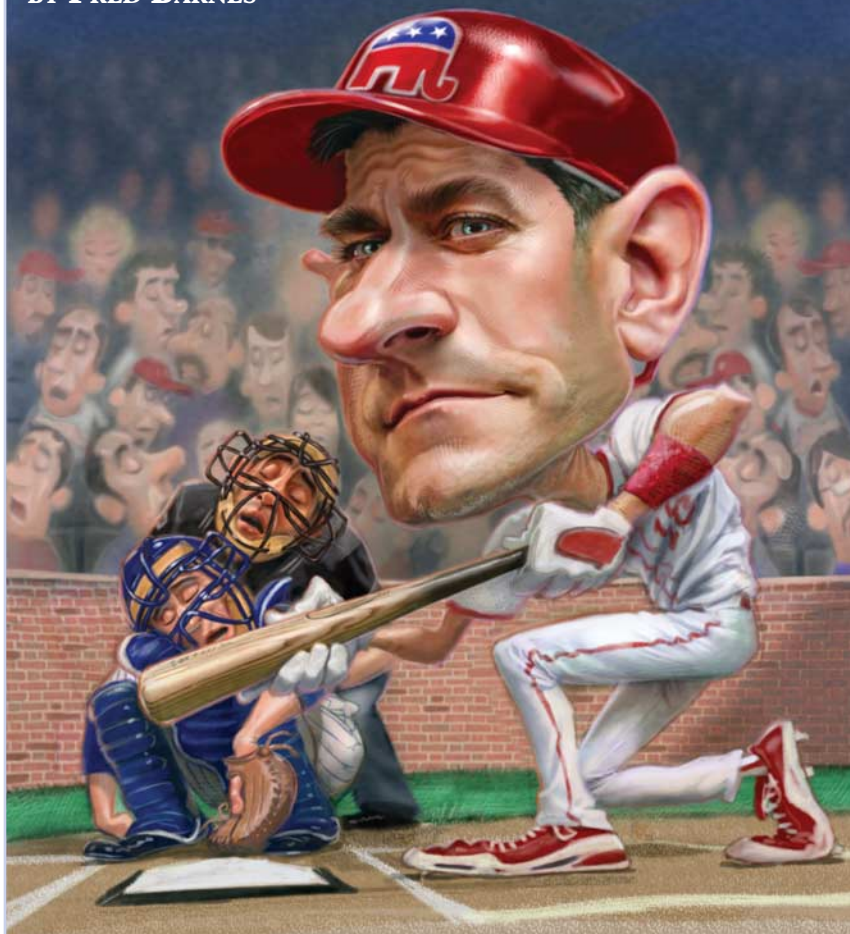
So Hillary got that right: There are consequences, dangerous ones, when America is absent. The Obama administration has a lot to answer for.

—Lee Smith

# No More Swinging for the Fences

Paul Ryan, Mr. Prudence.

BY FRED BARNES



**P**aul Ryan is chairman of the House Budget Committee, an unofficial but influential member of the House Republican leadership, and a loyal ally of Speaker John Boehner. As such, he is counseling “prudence” in dealing with President Obama, which he defines as “choosing

your fights wisely and not fighting for the sake of fighting.”

Ryan is also the GOP’s dominant voice on domestic policy. That includes everything from spending, taxes, and entitlements to antipoverty initiatives. Having been Mitt Romney’s vice presidential running mate, Ryan is now one of the most sought-after Republicans for speeches, TV appearances, and fundraising. In this

role—and possibly as a presidential candidate in 2016—he is expected to be bold, exciting, and forward-looking. That is, anything but prudent.

Reconciling these two roles won’t be easy, but that’s what Ryan must do for the next year or so. Then, at some point in 2014, he’ll decide between running for president and seeking reelection and, if Republicans hold the House, taking over as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, a post he’s long coveted.

The two jobs—chairman of a key House committee and presidential candidate—aren’t mutually exclusive. But it would be extraordinarily difficult to do both at the same time. So it’s likely Ryan will choose one or the other.

For now, he has a unique position in Congress. He’s the only Republican who might have challenged Boehner for the speakership successfully. But he never considered it. He and Boehner are close allies. Boehner supported Ryan’s creation of a trailblazing budget that included reform of Medicare. It passed the House in 2011, but died in the Democratic Senate.

Two weeks ago, Ryan was crucial to overwhelming GOP support of a new Republican tactic on raising the debt limit. Instead of insisting on spending cuts equal to the amount of new debt, Republicans approved a three-month suspension of the limit along with the requirement that the Senate approve a budget for the first time in four years. Absent a budget, senators wouldn’t receive their congressional pay. In the House, 33 Republicans voted no. Had Ryan opposed the plan, many more would surely have used his cover to justify a vote against it, and embarrassed Boehner.

Ryan’s support was consistent with what he calls “principled prudence.” This notion sounds odd coming from Ryan, known for his fearless approach to politics and policymaking. But with President Obama’s election to a second term, “we’ve had to readjust our expectations,” Ryan tells me.

This means, as I interpret it, that Republicans will exploit what leverage they have but not go beyond it in

GARY LOCKE

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their demands on Obama. So they've given up on spending cuts as part of a debt-limit deal, since they lack the leverage to attain it. And they don't want to be accused of flirting with a default and weakening an already weak economy.

But Republicans have the ability—the leverage—to determine the duration of an increase in the debt limit. Obama and Democrats would like to extend the limit for longer than three months. But in a mini-victory for Republicans, first the White House, then Senate majority leader Harry Reid caved. There was an added benefit: Democrats were split. House minority leader Nancy Pelosi was noisily opposed.

Largely unnoticed was that one of Ryan's goals—a debate over competing budgets—had been achieved. “When both parties put their solutions on the table, we can have a clear debate,” Ryan says. This is what Reid had avoided for the past four years and Ryan had advocated.

Ryan won't be excessively limited by prudence in drafting a Republican budget. With Boehner's encouragement, he intends to draft a budget that

**Ryan has an agenda that is his alone to pursue—at least among the potential Republican presidential candidates. As an acolyte of Jack Kemp, his first boss when he came to Washington after college, he favors a new round of welfare reform and expanded opportunity through economic growth.**

reaches balance in 10 years. “We can do this,” he says, though last year's spending plan didn't project a balanced budget until 2039. It left many conservatives and Republicans cold.

But Ryan's budget committee did outline (though not embrace) a quicker path to a balanced budget “under alternative growth scenarios.” That's code for tax reform to spur economic growth and higher revenues. Assuming faster growth, a balanced budget in 10 years becomes achievable. And it's a far more thrilling prospect than the conventional but painfully slow route to eliminating the budget deficit that Congressional Budget Office formulas require.


Ryan's more immediate goal is to “spare the country a debt crisis” by barring a surge in spending and borrowing. It's a task of pure drudgery, all the more so because he'll get no help from the president. Obama, Ryan has concluded, doesn't take the threat of a debt crisis seriously. But if the president prevails on his spending plans, a crisis may suddenly erupt, Ryan believes.

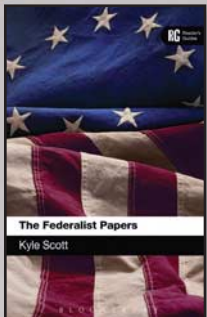
What would it look like? Ryan has assigned the budget committee staff to lay this out in terms the average person can understand. At the least, a crisis would involve higher interest rates, slower growth, more inflation, and a declining standard of living.

In the meantime, Ryan has an agenda that is his alone to pursue—at least among the potential Republican presidential candidates. As an acolyte of Jack Kemp, his first boss when he came to Washington after college two decades ago, he favors a new round of welfare reform and expanded opportunity through economic growth.

When he addressed the Kemp Foundation in December, he talked about a new “vision” of how to reduce poverty. “We must come together and advance new strategies for lifting people out of poverty,” he said, and he's not waiting for others to answer his call. Ryan has told the budget committee staff to develop new ways of expanding opportunity and helping the poor help themselves.

As a political issue, attacking poverty may not grip most Americans, particularly the Republican rank and file. But it's a noble cause and sets Ryan apart. And when he talks about poverty, he doesn't sound prudent at all. ♦


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# Blanco Verse

Really bad inaugural poetry.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

Many, many thoughts crossed my mind as Richard Blanco finished reading his inaugural poem at President Obama's swearing-in last week. *Well, I guess it could have been worse* was not one of them. But now I know: It could have been worse.

Blanco called his poem "One Today." The theme was the same as the president's address: unity and how we're really one big happy country when you get right down to it. Like so many ambitious, patriotic poems, "One Today" provided a panoramic ride on the Walt Whitman Good-Time Land o' The Free Tourmobile®. In six minutes' worth of prose sentences broken up to look like verse, we were taken from one coast to another, seeing happy workers working Whitmanesquely, productive farmers farming, brawny truckers trucking, and trains a-rollin' down the track: faces and hands planting, weaving, stitching, digging, and, of course, breathing. No yawping, thank God.

Like Lennon and McCartney, Blanco's poem followed the sun. From the first line his imagery was confusing. When the sun rose, it "kindled over our shores." Can you "kindle over" something, like a shore, without setting it ablaze—especially if right away you go on "peeking ... greeting ... spreading" and "then charging across the Rockies"? It makes the sun sound like an arsonist on the lam. In addition to the one sun, there are also one sky, one light, and one ground. This one

ground is "rooting us to every stalk of corn, every head of wheat sown by sweat ..." I can see how the stalk could be rooted to the ground, but not how the ground could root us to the stalk. And I've thought about this pretty hard. As for the sweat sowing heads of wheat ... never heard of such a thing.

My point is not to poke fun at Richard Blanco. Well, it is, actually, but he seems like a likable if extremely earnest fellow. Any way you cut it, it's an anachronistic job he was asked to do, writing and delivering a poem to order. It's like a mandate from another age, back when poets were thick on the ground and one or another of them could be counted on to pipe up at any civic occasion, christening every public event to any public purpose, from a toll road ribbon-cutting to a fish fry. Blanco's purpose on Inauguration Day was political, though he couldn't admit it—just as the president's address was a political document disguised as a celebration of transideological unity.

This is an Obama trademark. What was being celebrated on Inauguration Day wasn't a grand coming together but an inevitable separating out—the vanquishing of one set of political interests and beliefs (Republicans, conservatives, libertarians) by another (the president's, Blanco's, 51 percent of voters). Obama-style, the victory is not portrayed as the consequence of division but the fruit of unity. We are a united country—Blanco said so, the president said so—moving nobly and steadfastly toward a shared goal in a single direction, except nearly half the population is being dragged along



Richard Blanco

by the hair, kicking and screaming.

There were other poems celebrating the president's inauguration by poets as well known as Blanco. (Blanco is well known among people who know poets well.) Reading these inaugural efforts is how I discovered how much worse, poetically and politically, "One Today" could have been.

Noting that Robert Frost had read his poem "The Gift Outright" at John Kennedy's inauguration, Yahoo! News decided to commission inaugural poems from "our favorite living poets." The world of poetry is not large; successful poets establish their success either by sitting on panels that hand out awards for poetry or accepting awards for poetry from panels that other poets sit on. Inevitably the poets chosen by Yahoo! were Pulitzer winners, or winners of or finalists for the National Book Award and/or the National Book Critics Circle Award or the Bollingen Prize or other prizes that serve as a membership card to the poetry guild.

Perhaps the selection impressed the readers of Yahoo! News, I don't know, but Yahoo! News was very impressed with the results. Their poets produced "poems that can, in our humble opinion, stand beside even 'The Gift Outright' in ingenuity and sheer beauty." Yahoo! News was wrong about this.

*We sang, sang* Brenda Shaughnessy (National Book Critics Circle Award), for example, *a song of saying so, singing O / So we might be heard, we voted. O, out of many, one. / Out of everyone, you.* The "you" here is, of course, the Big O himself, the president. *O you are still president / and that is our poetry. The plain truth made beautiful.* It's not hard to imagine Brenda Shaughnessy, thinking up her poem, making an "O face" of her own. In her favor, she also refers to Rachel Maddow as a "flotation device"—a poetic image that makes more sense the longer you think about it.

In "Oath," Kevin Young (National Book Award, National Book Critics Circle Award) offered an orthodontic image of the president getting sworn in: *this smidge of sun—shine it down into your mouth.* Glug. James Tate (Pulitzer, National Book Award) wrote a letter to

SAM FARZANEH

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the president, “Dear Mr. President,” instead of a poem. It resembled a poem only in that it was impossible to decipher. (A “pile of leaves” working as a loan officer in a bank and offering discount loans! Go figure.) Paul Muldoon, in “For Barack Obama,” rhymed “deliver” with “chicken livered.” I’d say “Give that man a Pulitzer!” if he didn’t already have one.

One of the poems created what we in the Old Media like to call “an Internet sensation.” James Franco is a movie actor, hence an idiot, hence a source of rich amusement that swells to the degree he insists on being taken seriously. So seriously did he take his poem, “Obama in Asheville,” that he read it for a video and even put on a T-shirt. He filmed himself lying down, however, and on the video he had a sapped, woebegone look, as though he had spent a tortured night writhing in the cauldron of poetic creation, searching, searching for *le mot juste*. But probably not: *I was in Asheville, studying writing . . . / I write confessions and characters and that sort of thing.*

“Obama in Asheville” is a long poem—not the *Aeneid*, but long enough for the poet to drop the names of Thomas Wolfe, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Cormac McCarthy, and *the likes of Tom Cruise / And Katie Holmes, and Claire Danes . . . and the likes of Christopher Hitchens, too, and his wife, whose name he evidently forgot and was therefore not worth dropping. And the president, of course. I met Obama once*, the poet writes. Another one of Obama’s many notable achievements.

“Obama in Asheville” crescendos in the poet’s reflections on a movie that might someday be made about the president:

*If I were to act in the film about Obama, / All I would need to get down . . . is his essential kindness.*

And then comes the last line:

*I’d win the Academy Award if I just captured that.*

I don’t know about James Franco winning an Oscar. But wait till the National Book Critics Circle Award gets a look at him! ♦

# When a Cardinal Ruled the Roost

Stan Musial, 1920-2013.

BY GARY SCHMITT

If you lived in the decade following World War II in the American Southwest or a goodly portion of the South and were a baseball fan, there is a good chance you were a fan of the St. Louis Cardinals. And if you were a Cardinals fan during this period, you almost certainly thought that Stan “the Man” Musial was the era’s greatest player—and you would have been right.

Musial, who died at the age of 92 on January 19, played all of his 22 years with the Cardinals. As virtually every obituary and tribute has noted: He was a first-ballot Hall of Fame inductee, three-time National League Most Valuable Player, seven-time batting champ, and was selected to the National League All-Star team an astounding 24 times. When Musial retired in 1963, his hit total was second only to Ty Cobb’s. And for the baseball statistics geeks, Musial’s “wins above replacement” number—which tries to approximate how many wins a team owes to a particular player in its lineup as opposed to an average replacement—puts him behind only Barry Bonds, Willie Mays, and Hank Aaron among post-World War II position players. While Musial “only” hit 475 home runs, when he left the game, that made him the sixth greatest home-run hitter in major league history—a total made all the more remarkable by the fact that he never struck out

more than 46 times in a season.

So you knew about Musial because Cardinals games were broadcast by dozens of radio stations throughout the greater Missouri River Valley and, most important, by KMOX, a St. Louis-based, 50,000-watt “clear channel” station. As a clear channel station, KMOX had exclusive broadcast rights

after dark for a specific frequency throughout the whole of the United States, meaning nighttime games could be listened to over large swaths of the country with little or no trouble. (The Cardinals’ wide popularity thanks to radio presaged the Atlanta Braves’ exposure on WTBS cable TV nationwide in the 1980s.)

Also, at the time, the National League in which the Cardinals played had only eight teams, with none in the South or the West. So the team from St. Louis still largely ruled the roost in vast sections of the country when it came to the National League.

But like St. Louis itself, which in 1900 was the fourth most populous city in the United States and by 2000 had slipped to forty-ninth, so too has Musial’s fame slipped from the country’s collective sports memory. Indeed, when professional baseball and Mastercard ran a vote for the All-Century squad of 25 players and pitchers in 1999, Musial failed to make the cut. He was only added to the full, 30-member list when a blue ribbon panel was tasked with adding five more players to the team.

This was perhaps predictable. If Musial had played in New York, with all of its networks and newspapers, he,



Stan “the Man” Musial

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AP / BETTMANN / CORBIS



not Joe DiMaggio, would have been the man who walked on water. However, just as it seems impossible that the haughty DiMaggio could have played anywhere but in New York, so it seems unthinkable that the ever-genial Musial could have played anywhere but in staid, pleasant, midwestern St. Louis. DiMaggio was famous for marrying and then divorcing Marilyn Monroe. Musial seemed boring by comparison. Having married his hometown sweetheart at the age of 19, he stayed with her for 70-plus years, was a faithful, mass-going Catholic, and raised a family of four normal kids in a largely middle-class neighborhood of St. Louis. And while DiMaggio toward the end of his life appeared in TV commercials selling Mr. Coffee machines to make ends meet, Musial had created a small empire of successful business endeavors.

But, in truth, Musial's own story was not at all boring. The son of a barely literate Polish immigrant who worked in what today would be considered a toxic zinc factory along the banks of the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania, Musial first played the game with a broom handle and rags sewed together into a ball by his mother. Signed as a pitcher, Musial was on the verge of being let go from the Cardinals organization in 1941 after being shelled by hitters during spring training. But Branch Rickey, the team's famous general manager, gave him one last chance to start his career over as an outfielder. By the end of 1941, Musial had rocketed up the minor-league system. Two months shy of his 21st birthday, he was called up to the big club for the last two weeks of the pennant race, hitting .426. Musial never saw a day in the minors after that, making, as the sportswriter George Vecsey has written, "one of the most incredible leaps any player has ever made in one season."

The nickname "Stan the Man" was bestowed on him by fans in Brooklyn, where the Dodgers still played. As Musial was ringing up hit after hit—in 1948 and 1949, Musial would bat over .500 against the Dodgers—fans at old Ebbets Field were heard first to murmur, then chant, "here comes *the man*."

Yet it can be argued that Musial stayed "the Man" not only for his skills at the plate and on the base paths but also for his comportment. He never showboated, was never tossed out of a game, and was famous for treating fans and opposing players with genial grace. No less important was the role he played as the game was being racially integrated with the likes of Jackie Robinson and Willie Mays. As elsewhere, St. Louis was a place where race relations were not the best, and the Cardinals had a handful of players from the South who were not at all happy with baseball's integration. But Musial, the team's star, made it clear that he was perfectly okay with playing against the Dodger Robinson, and the potential for any real trouble faded away. And when the Cardinals finally integrated, Musial and his wife were key to making sure Bill White and Bob Gibson and the other black players and their families felt like they were part of the Cardinals "team."

Never one to make speeches, Musial

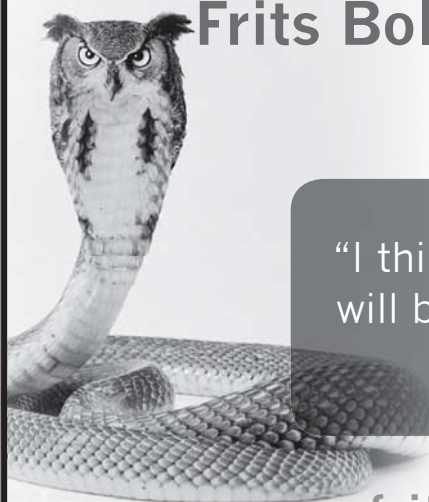
was distinguished by his basic decency. As Vecsey recounts in his biography of Musial, during a taxi ride in New York on the way to the Giants' Polo Grounds, "One of his teammates noticed a Jewish name on the cabbie's placard and started speaking in a crude version of a Jewish accent." Musial told him to knock it off. "When they got to the ballpark, the teammate tried to pay for the ride, as if to make amends, but Musial insisted on paying." Musial then told his teammate "to never get in a cab with him" again.

Americans like their heroes to be bigger than life but also to have enough flaws to keep them from being too out of the ordinary. Musial's "problem" is that, while a truly exceptional player, he also led an exceptionally sane and happy life. There was no tragic demise or flaw that brought him low or made for an interesting movie or, for that matter, even a memorable line in a song. Maybe that's why Stan Musial is arguably the most underrated baseball star of all time. ♦

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will blush as they read it."  
—Theodore Dalrymple

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**THE INTELLECTUAL  
TEMPTATION**

# Israelis Ignore Obama

They know their interests better than he does.

BY JOHN TABIN

*Tel Aviv*

**T**he international media get a lot wrong in their reporting on Israel, but the latest election results have thrown into stark relief just how wildly reporters can miss the mark. The second-largest party in the next Knesset will be the centrist Yesh Atid, a new party led by former journalist Yair Lapid; it seems likely that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will welcome Lapid into the next coalition, shifting the government's center of gravity toward the middle. But in advance of the vote, the *New York Times*, *Time*, NBC, the BBC, Reuters, the *Guardian*, and numerous other outlets confidently reported that the election would represent a shift to the far right. The *New Yorker*'s David Remnick wrung his hands for 9,000 words on the topic.

The media narrative began with a viewpoint reportedly voiced by Barack Obama. When the Palestinians violated the Oslo Accords by unilaterally seeking and winning an upgraded status at the United Nations General Assembly, Netanyahu's government responded by announcing plans for new construction outside Jerusalem. According to the *Atlantic*'s Jeffrey Goldberg, the White House's favorite reporter on the Israel beat, the president privately reacted to the move by repeatedly commenting that "Israel doesn't know what its own best interests are." Never mind the counter-argument that it wouldn't be in Israel's interest to let the Palestinian move at the U.N. go unanswered, the conventional wisdom holds that

settlement expansion undermines Israel's interest in negotiated peace with a Palestinian state.

From that conventional wisdom flowed the preelection narrative in the press: The joint list that Netanyahu's Likud formed for this election with Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party, dubbed Likud Beiteinu, was full of radicals; moderate Likudniks had been squeezed out. The phenom of the election would be Naftali Bennett of the Jewish Home party, a hawkish religious Zionist with sympathy for the settler movement. The government would be full of advocates for unilateral annexation of all or part of the West Bank. The two-state solution would be a dead letter, and the result would be an apartheid state that would become an international pariah.

These dire conclusions would be debatable even if the rest of the analysis had proved correct, but the key error was viewing Israeli politics entirely in terms of the conflict with the Palestinians. That's not how Israelis view it.

The election focused almost entirely on domestic issues. Bennett actually made a point of not talking about the Palestinians; his impressive poll numbers (which he ended up underperforming) reflected his charisma and his biography of business success and special forces service, not his views on settlements.

If the prophets of an Israel doomed by the far right noticed the role of domestic issues, it was often to lament, as Remnick did, that the left was focused on them instead of on reviving the peace process. But the decision of the Labor party, led by Shelly Yachimovich, to focus on domestic

policy—Labor's slogan for this election was "It could be better here"—was a success. Yachimovich will lead the Knesset's third-largest party.

But the greater success, of course, was Yesh Atid's. And again, Lapid's party succeeded with an appeal focused on domestic politics. Dov Lipman, number 17 on the Yesh Atid list—and therefore someone who wasn't expected to be in the next Knesset, but who will be—told reporters that the result was "a very clear statement the people of Israel want to see a different direction. They want to see a country which deals with all the pressing issues inside the country in terms of education, equality of national service, housing reform, electoral reform, dealing with middle-class Israel."

The national service issue was especially important. The exemption from military service for the Haredim (also called the ultra-Orthodox) lapsed last year and was left in legal limbo by Netanyahu, hamstrung by Haredi parties in his governing coalition. If Netanyahu can form a coalition that no longer depends on the Haredi parties, a more equitable regime of national service (which may or may not mean military service) is quite possible. Bennett has endorsed some sort of reform on this front—a Haredi man heckled him over it when he visited the Western Wall the day before the election—so a coalition of Likud Beiteinu, Jewish Home, and Yesh Atid (and possibly another party to Lapid's left) may successfully pursue this popular initiative.

American pollster Mark Mellman, who was hired by Lapid, points out that more than two-thirds of Israelis still support a two-state solution, but two-thirds also agree that "the peace process with the Palestinians is at a standstill for reasons that have nothing to do with Israel and there is no chance of progress in the foreseeable future." All evidence suggests that they're correct, and as such, it's perfectly understandable that Israelis would turn to other issues. Contra Obama, they do understand their own interests. ♦

*John Tabin is a writer in Washington.*

# Putin's Innocent Victims

A mean-hearted ban on the adoption of Russian children by American parents. **BY CATHY YOUNG**

After retaking Russia's presidency last year, Vladimir Putin seemed to be headed for master-of-the-universe status. The political stage had been cleared of potential challengers to his power. The protest movement that had risen in December 2011 in response to his planned reelection had dwindled by the summer of 2012, demoralized by a lack of clear goals, divided, and weakened by stepped-up repression. Yet at the start of the new year, anti-Putin passions got a boost from an unexpected source: a law that made Czar Putin and his minions look like bullies taking out their anger on children.

The "Dima Yakovlev law," passed by the Russian Duma on December 21 and signed by Putin a week later, includes a ban on the adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens. Its informal name comes from a tragic 2008 case in Virginia: Eighteen-month-old Chase Harrison (born Dmitri Yakovlev in Russia) died of heat stroke after his adoptive father, Miles Harrison, left the boy in a parked car outside his office, believing he had dropped him off at day care. Harrison, described by witnesses as a caring and attentive parent, was acquitted of involuntary manslaughter by a judge, who accepted the defense's argument that his negligence was a terrible but innocent mistake. Back in Russia,

the story set off a media-driven wave of anti-American outrage: Here was proof that American parents treat adopted Russian children as disposable toys, while American courts regard them as worthless *Untermenschen*.

But the peculiarity of the Dima Yakovlev law is that the impetus for it came not from this or any other horror tale of a Russian-born child victim.



The 'March Against Scoundrels' in Moscow, January 13

Indeed, only last July the United States and Russia finalized a treaty regulating adoptions, now rendered void by the new law. The adoption ban was part of a larger bill imposing sanctions on American citizens involved in "violations of basic human rights"—Russia's answer to a U.S. law that targets Russian human rights abusers.

Overwhelmingly approved by the U.S. Senate in December, the so-called Magnitsky law penalizes Russian officials implicated in egregious human rights violations, and specifically in the persecution of Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer who died in a Moscow prison in 2009. (Magnitsky, a Moscow adviser to a financial firm owned by U.S. businessman Bill Browder,

was jailed after trying to expose a tax fraud scheme by Russian police and government officials; his death was almost certainly a result of brutality and medical neglect.) Offenders can be barred from entry to the United States and denied access to the U.S. banking system, including their assets in American banks.

Russia's first reaction was to reciprocate with a visa ban against American malefactors, particularly ones deemed to have wronged Russian citizens. These provisions still make up most of the legislation. But they have little bite: Americans don't travel to Russia much, and they certainly don't keep money in Russian banks. The adoption ban was intended to hit at least some Americans where it hurts.

The explicit linkage of the adoption ban and retaliation against the United States exposed the measure as utterly cynical, giving the lie to protestations of concern for Russian children. Indeed, critics were quick to denounce the legislation as "anti-child," pointing out that those hit hardest will be Russia's most vulnerable: orphaned and abandoned children, many with physical or developmental dis-

abilities, who cannot find adoptive families in their own country. American aid organizations estimate that up to 800,000 Russian children live in notoriously underfunded and mismanaged state-run "children's homes." Russian officials cite far lower estimates of about 105,000. Whatever the actual number, adoption by Western couples usually represents these children's only chance at a decent life, quality medical care—and a family.

Since 1991, 19 children from Russia—out of about 60,000 adoptees—have died as a result of abuse or neglect by American adoptive parents. The numbers for children adopted within Russia are fairly similar. Meanwhile,

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there seem to be no available statistics on fatalities in Russia's orphanages, but Russian child welfare activists cite grim numbers from the Ministry of Education. Fewer than 1 in 20 young adults raised in institutions go to college, 1 in 5 are unemployed, 2 out of 5 become involved in crime, and 1 in 10 commit suicide.

The plight of institutionalized orphans in Russia is well known, and the Kremlin's brazen use of these children as pawns incensed even many people hitherto apolitical. Bizarre rhetoric from many of the ban's supporters added fuel to the fire. Duma member Svetlana Goryacheva asserted that many American-adopted children were used for organ harvesting and sexual exploitation, while the rest would be trained as cannon fodder for America's wars. Russian Orthodox church spokesman Vsevolod Chaplin opined that Russian kids in America were unlikely to be raised as good Christians and would not go to Heaven (prompting journalist Yulia Latynina to retort

that, on the other hand, children in Russian orphanages had a good chance of going to Heaven very soon).

In the pro-government business newspaper *Vzglyad*, journalist Denis Tukmakov bluntly stated that it was better for Russian children to die than to become Americans and potential enemies of Russia, and that banning foreign adoptions could motivate Russians to take better care of their own. Putin weighed in with his trademark macho crudeness, asking a journalist who questioned the law at a press conference if he was "some kind of sadomasochist" who enjoyed being pushed around by the Americans.

Meanwhile, anti-Kremlin journalists, bloggers, and activists referred to "King Herod's law," "the anti-orphan law," and "the scoundrels' law." A petition to repeal the ban gathered more than 100,000 signatures; a group of Russian adoptive parents wrote an open letter imploring Putin "not to turn orphaned Russian children into hostages and not to deny them a future."

On January 13, as many as 50,000 Muscovites braved bitter cold to turn out for the city's largest demonstration since last winter, billed as the "March Against Scoundrels." Many carried posters of Putin with the scarlet letters *POZOR!*—"shame"—across his forehead. There were smaller rallies in St. Petersburg and several other cities.

The Dima Yakovlev law appears to have shamed many Russians out of their apathy. Perhaps it was the Kremlin's blatant hypocrisy—or its stark inhumanity, this time not toward dissidents or tycoons but children and families. (Grani.ru commentator Ilya Milshtein pointed out the twisted irony: The United States passes a law to punish Russian officials who mistreat Russian citizens; Russia strikes back with a law that mistreats Russian children.)

The backlash is mainly an urban middle-class phenomenon. Russia's official polling agency, the VTSIOM (All-Russian Institute for the Study of Public Opinion), reports that three-quarters of Russians support the adoption ban. Lev Gudkov of the independent Levada Center polling firm told the Voice of America that this result was obtained partly by stacked questions; but it also reflects genuine sentiment, born of a mix of nationalist sensitivity and media misinformation.

Still, a revitalized protest movement, even drawn mostly from the same base as before, will affect the political climate. "Putin's decision to tighten the screws and intimidate civil society has run up against its first real roadblock, sparking a strong and angry response," opposition leader Vladimir Ryzhkov wrote in the *Moscow Times*. "That should prompt the authorities, civil society, and the opposition movement to reevaluate the political outlook for this year." The title of Ryzhkov's column—"The Straw To Break Putin's Back"—seems too optimistic, as does his prediction that without real change a "social explosion" may be imminent. But while the Putin regime is not about to fall, it is unlikely to enjoy dissent-free domestic bliss. ♦

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# The Real Israel Lobby

It's the American people.

BY MEIR Y. SOLOVEICHIK

*The Jewish Lobby intimidates a lot of people up here. . . . I'm a United States senator. I'm not an Israeli senator. I'm a United States senator. I support Israel, but my first interest is I take an oath of office to the Constitution of the United States—not to a president, not to a party, not to Israel. If I go run for Senate in Israel, I'll do that.*

—Chuck Hagel

Much has been made of why Senator Hagel's now-infamous words are so offensive to American Jews. The statement, it has been noted, conjures images of dual loyalty, and implies that Washington politicians are in the pocket of a Jewish cabal that does not truly seek the interests of the United States. These criticisms are certainly true, but it is important that American Jews also articulate another profound problem with Senator Hagel's statement: that it both ignores the existence of the many millions of non-Jewish Americans who care deeply about Israel's security, and reflects disregard for why they do so.

This devotion to Israel's well-being was made most manifest to me when I was privileged to deliver an invocation at the Republican National Convention last August. In my prayer, I spoke of the American belief that our liberties were the gift of God, and that in enunciating this principle America had been called to serve as a "beacon of freedom to the world, and an ally of free countries like the State of Israel, an island of liberty, democracy, and hope." The audience, composed

almost entirely of non-Jews, broke into applause at these words, an unusual reaction to an invocation. Most overwhelming was the warm reaction I received from the delegates throughout the day, thanking me for my prayer, and expressing their concern for, and blessings on, Israel.

This expression of love for Israel was not, as is often unfairly suggested, founded on apocalyptic expectations, but rather on the conviction that Israel is indeed an island of liberty in a region that is an ocean of hostility to America and the American idea. As such, Israel's endurance represents a triumph of the American vision—a vision that was, in part, inspired by the Bible, the book bequeathed to the world by Ancient Israel. The depth of this American conviction was most eloquently expressed not in a rabbinic invocation, but rather in a speech made by a non-Jewish former governor of Texas, who never served as a senator from Israel, but did spend eight years as president of the United States:

The alliance between our governments is unbreakable, yet the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty. It is grounded in the shared spirit of our people, the bonds of the Book, the ties of the soul. . . . In spite of the violence, in defiance of the threats, Israel has built a thriving democracy in the heart of the Holy Land. You have welcomed immigrants from the four corners of the Earth. You have forged a free and modern society based on a love of liberty, a passion for justice, and a respect for human dignity. You have worked tirelessly for peace. And you have fought valiantly for freedom.

These words were spoken by President George W. Bush in celebration of

the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding. If someone had lived his entire life in Israel and never met an American, he might have been surprised by the profound love for the Jewish state expressed by this non-Jewish president. Yet Americans understand that the president was giving voice not only to his own views but also to those of so many other citizens of the United States. It is because of these Americans that the United States has stood steadfastly with Israel. If anyone ought to understand this, it is a certain former "United States senator"—and a Nebraskan, representing Middle America, no less.

Before the 2012 election, one editor of a prominent American Jewish newspaper mused that in contrast to President Obama, Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush scored high on what he called "the kishka factor," a Yiddish way of saying that these two presidents embodied a love for Israel in their gut, an "emotional kinship to the Jewish State." Senator Hagel has, in the past decade, made the state of his own kishkes quite clear.

At the same time, I have been blessed to encounter numerous Americans—and they are typical of millions more—who have no idea what the word "kishkes" means, but whose concern for the state of Israel is bone-deep, and this concern is founded on a loyalty to the American idea and a profound understanding of its role in history and in the world. We will see this non-Jewish "pro-Israel" lobby on display at the Hagel hearings, when we hear from senators from diverse states, who will, as the Hagel nomination is considered, not only make known their own concern for Israel, but represent thereby the genuine devotion and concerns of their constituents. In this way these "United States senators" will fulfill their duty to the Constitution of the United States.

It is for these senators' properly representing those non-Jews who voted for them, and for those Americans' loyalty to, and love for, the vision and destiny of America, that this American Jew will remain forever grateful. ♦

*Meir Y. Soloveichik is director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University and associate rabbi at Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan.*

# The Sensitivity Apparatus

*On the scourge of 'human rights' commissions*

By MARK HEMINGWAY

**T**ony Tomelden never wanted to be a First Amendment crusader. A lifelong resident of Washington, D.C., he's a working-class guy in a town that's consumed by politics. He runs a bar called The Pug. And it's not just any bar, it's the best bar in the city. That may be my opinion, but Googling the place yields many reviews written by people who agree:

- The Pug has this fantastic hole-in-the-wall-dive feeling that is rare to find in D.C. You'll know instantly if this is the kind of bar for you. This isn't the place for fancy drinks and dress, leave that at the door or keep on walking. Short for "pugilist," The Pug is covered in old boxing memorabilia, making it feel like it's got a history, some grit under the nails, and a few calluses from working hard every day. . . .

- Best part is reading their entire philosophy written in chalk across the top of the bar wall: No idiots, no bombs, no shooters, no specials, no politics, relax, drink, be cool, behave. It pretty much sets the tone and provides the perfect environment for a quiet place to get a shot and a beer on a weeknight. . . .

- Personality, character, soul—a bar can't learn these things. Grit, diversity, and lovability? The Sweet Science? Even less so. And The Pug has these things deep. . . .

- "Put away your credit card. We're grown-ups here. You'll pay when you're ready." That was how I was greeted when I first went into The Pug.

One could go on, though if you ask Tony about his establishment's ambiance, he's likely to stare at you past the brim of his trademark flatcap and make fun of you for using the word "ambiance." Before buying the building in 2005 and opening The Pug in 2007—blame that gap on D.C.'s excessive red tape for small-business owners—he was the head bartender at Capitol Lounge for 12 years.

*Mark Hemingway is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

Capitol Lounge has the distinction of being just about the closest place to the U.S. Capitol to wet your whistle. There Tony catered to an influential crowd, mostly by making a point of letting them know that the moment they entered his bar they were no longer influential. The "No Politics" sign also hung behind Tony at Capitol Lounge, and he was known for enforcing it whenever silly arguments were within earshot.

The result is that among his clientele there's an unusual and intense affection for Tony, which seems nearly perverse when you find yourself on the receiving end of his gruff demeanor and cutting sense of humor. Go

to The Pug and you'll encounter a lot of things—complimentary cheese balls, Natty Boh in a can, The Pogues and John Lee Hooker piping out of speakers, and a couple of different games on the scattered TVs. What you won't find is any trace of pretension. In fact, if you go to the bar's website and click on the link that says "specialty cocktails," it sends you to the website for *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

Authentic places are harder and harder to find in D.C., a trend that has its upsides and

downsides. The Pug is located on H Street in the Northeast section of the city, a historically black neighborhood that the city is trying to revitalize. While many businesses in the area are decidedly trendy—until recently, the joint a few doors down served up a hipster one-two punch of indie rock and burlesque shows—H Street is located on the outer edge of Capitol Hill just below Trinidad, one of D.C.'s crime-ridden neighborhoods. Things are still in transition. On a busy Friday night in June, a man was stabbed on the same block as The Pug.

For years, Tony has been doing a fine job of running a bar beloved by all walks of life in a neighborhood where an array of racial, economic, and political fault lines meet. Ironically, Tony finally brought trouble on himself by violating his own rules. Politics and specialty drinks are



*The best bar in Washington*



problematic enough on their own. When Tony combined the two, the full weight of the D.C. government came down on him and made The Pug the latest battleground in a flat-out assault on freedom of speech that's likely also happening in a neighborhood near you.

Most people live in total ignorance of “human rights” or “civil rights” commissions, until they run afoul of them. They began popping up all over the country in the 1960s and '70s, and now nearly every state and good-sized municipality has one. In theory, they were set up to handle the flood of discrimination cases that was expected to overwhelm the legal system after the flurry of Great Society legislation. Local human rights commissions were expected to resolve these disputes quickly in administrative tribunals. In practice, however, the commissions have never really served enough of a purpose to justify their existence. They've devolved into bureaucratic star chambers with the power to ruin your life and run you out of business.

And so, on September 6, a representative of the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights walked into The Pug and handed Tony a letter that began:

It was brought to the attention of the D.C. Office of Human Rights on September 5, 2012, that your establishment, The Pug, was displaying a racially offensive sign which advertised a cocktail for customers' purchase. Specifically, the sign stated: Marion Berry's (sic) Dirty Asian Punch. Below the wording was displayed a caricature of an individual with slanted eyes and protruding teeth. We believe that such a sign is not demonstrative of the shared values and practices that make the District a fully inclusive environment for all residents and visitors. Additionally, we believe the statement violates the D.C. Human Rights Act.

The letter was cc'd to Tommy Wells, who is the city council representative for D.C.'s Ward 6, where The Pug is located, as well as to the heads of a host of D.C. city agencies—the Office of Community Affairs, the Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA). Tony had 72 hours to remove the sign, and was further informed that first-time human rights offenders could be fined as much as \$10,000. As near as Tony can figure, he landed on the radar of the D.C. Office of Human Rights after Mike DeBonis, a city reporter for the *Washington Post* and patron of The Pug, tweeted a picture of the sign two days before.

If Tony's sign seems egregiously offensive, some backstory is in order. Last April, D.C. city council member Marion Barry—yes, that Marion Barry, the former mayor whom D.C.'s Ward 8 residents keep electing despite his having been caught on camera by the FBI smoking crack with his girlfriend—got himself in hot water for his own racist ideas about civic renewal. “We got to do something about these Asians coming in and opening up businesses and dirty shops,” Barry said in front of a local television news camera. “They ought to go. I'm going to say that right now.”

Barry's remark brought widespread condemnation, but less than three weeks later Barry was in trouble again for making racial remarks about Asians. “If you go to the hospital now, you'll find a number of immigrants who are nurses, particularly from the Philippines,” said



*The offending sign, in the photo tweeted by Washington Post reporter Mike DeBonis*

Barry. “And no offense, but let's grow our own teachers, let's grow our own nurses, and so that we don't have to go scrounging in our community clinics and other kinds of places, having to hire people from somewhere else.” No less than the Philippine ambassador felt compelled to respond, “Council member Barry's penchant for blaming Asians, who only want to work for their American dream, fuels racism, discrimination, and violence.”

Barry's comments were not exactly small news locally. It's safe to say nearly everyone bellying up to the bar at The Pug understood right off that Tony was making a joke at the expense of Barry's racism, not making fun of Asians, when he posted the sign advertising “The Ward 8 Special,” namely, “Marion Berry's Dirty Asian Summer Punch!” So Tony fired off a response to Gustavo F. Velasquez, the director of the D.C. Office of Human Rights. “I

wrote a letter back saying, ‘I received your warning and I fully intend to take the sign down, but is there any way you can send me a copy of the letter you sent Marion Barry after he made his comments on Asians?’” he says. Aping the language of the letter addressed to him, Tony wrote to Velasquez, “I believe [Barry’s] comments would fall under the umbrella of making a certain people feel ‘objectionable, unwelcome, unacceptable, or undesirable.’” Not surprisingly, no copy of such a letter addressed to Barry has been forthcoming.

And since Tony is on the taller side, with a pale complexion and sandy hair, his ethnicity is not entirely obvious. Along with the letter, he included a picture of his father, an Air Force veteran in the cockpit of an airplane. There’s no mistaking the half-Filipino, half-Irish heritage of the elder Tomelden. In the letter, Tony goes on to make the intent of his satirical cocktail painfully clear:

[My father] was always proud of being from D.C., and he was always a fan of Marion Barry. Unfortunately, he passed away not too long ago, so I have no way of knowing how he would have reacted to Mr. Barry’s comments regarding Asians in Ward 8, quickly followed by his comments about Filipino nurses. I can only assume that it would not have pleased him.

According to Tony, Velasquez claimed not to have gotten the joke in the sign until he received Tony’s letter: “Once we received your pictures,” Velasquez said, “we realized that we had mistaken what the sign meant. But we had already started the process and we had to finish it.” If the director of a D.C. agency claims he didn’t understand what “Marion Berry’s Dirty Asian Summer Punch” referred to, either he’s lying, has no sense of humor, is profoundly ignorant, or all of the above.

Regardless of whether Velasquez willfully misrepresented the satirical intent of the sign, Tony’s main concern by now was that the D.C. Office of Human Rights was misinforming others about what was going on. Tony asked Velasquez to pass on his letter to all of the officials carbon copied on the commission’s original letter to clear up any potential misunderstanding. “Make sure they get a copy of the letter, because you threw me out there,” Tony recalls of their exchange. “And [Velasquez] said, ‘Well, we didn’t send this out to anyone except for Koo [the director of D.C.’s Office of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs]. That was just between the three of us.’”

While Tony had already agreed to take down the sign, he didn’t do it right away. “Punk-ass that I am, I was going to wait 71 and three-quarters hours to take it down,” he says. He wanted to make a big production of removing the sign in front of everybody, as his own personal statement about what he thought of the D.C. government coming into his bar and telling him what he could and could not say.

So the sign was still up the day after Tony’s exchange with the D.C. Office of Human Rights. That’s when a representative of the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration stormed into The Pug and demanded the sign be removed. This time Tony wasn’t around, and ABRA spoke to one of his employees who was in the bar prepping food for the evening. He was afraid that ABRA would shut The Pug down immediately, so he erased the sign and scrambled to tell Tony what was going on.

Once Tony heard what had happened, he contacted Velasquez. “So I called him back, and said ‘You just told me you didn’t [inform other city agencies about the sign]. And ABRA is in my establishment right now.’ And he said, ‘Well, this isn’t their jurisdiction. They have no control over this.’ I said, ‘They’re in there threatening me right now.’ And he said, ‘Well, I don’t know what to tell you.’”

By now, Mike DeBonis at the *Washington Post* was sniffing around the story. Eventually the *Post* published a rather unflattering write-up online of how the city was bullying The Pug. When contacted by DeBonis, ABRA director Fred Moosally made the questionable claim his agency hadn’t issued any threats. “When we went out there, the sign was already down,” he said. “We didn’t tell anyone to take down a sign.”

After the story hit the *Post*, The Pug became the source of much local chatter. The piece even gained a small measure of national publicity after it landed on the Drudge Report. “The ACLU called, and it exploded,” Tony says, but aside from making a few local radio appearances, he didn’t pursue it much further because by then the sign was down and he wanted to move on. *Prince of Petworth*, a popular D.C. blog, ran an online poll that showed overwhelming support for Tony, but the attention was not all positive. “Channel 7 went over to a barber shop in Marion Barry’s district, and they all called me racist,” recalls Tony.

If you care about freedom of expression, the resolution of Tony’s encounter with the D.C. Human Rights office is more than a little unsatisfactory. What if Tony hadn’t flipped the politically correct script (a white guy can’t make fun of a black politician) by revealing his Filipino heritage? What if his plight hadn’t been covered by one of the nation’s most influential newspapers? What if Tony hadn’t been making a joke, but exercising his right to express an opinion contrary to the liberal orthodoxy enforced by the “human rights” thought police?

If you find yourself trying to answer this last question, don’t expect the ACLU to give you a call. In recent years, the group most responsible for challenging the blatantly unconstitutional behavior of human rights commissions has been a Christian legal group, the Alliance Defending

Freedom (ADF). That's because stamping out religious liberty appears to be a cause that state and local human rights groups have zealously embraced, First Amendment be damned.

- In 2007, a lesbian couple brought a complaint to the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights against a Methodist organization for not allowing them to use the church's beachfront camp for a civil-union ceremony. More specifically, the church said they could use the property, just not any of the sacred worship spaces within. That wasn't accommodating enough, so an administrative judge with the Division on Civil Rights stripped the group of their tax-exempt status, costing them \$20,000 a year.

- In 2006, the Arlington County, Virginia, Human Rights Commission—just across the Potomac River from The Pug—filed charges against Bono Film and Video for refusing a gay group that wanted video duplication services for footage of a gay rights rally. Again, the owner's Christian beliefs were cited as the reason for not wanting to participate in promoting the film.

- In 2008, the New Mexico Human Rights Commission ruled against a wedding photography business for declining to photograph a gay commitment ceremony. The husband and wife who own the business are evangelical Christians. They were fined \$6,637.

- And in 2011, the D.C. Office of Human Rights investigated allegations that the rights of Muslim college students were violated because they were prohibited from forming a Muslim student group, let alone provided rooms without Christian symbols. The school in question? Catholic University.

In addition to handling the cases in New Jersey and New Mexico, ADF is representing Blaine Adamson, the owner of Hands On Originals, a printer in Kentucky, against the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission. When Hands On Originals was asked to print T-shirts promoting the local gay pride parade, the owner refused on account of his Christian beliefs. According to Adamson, "It's not that we have a sign on the front door that says no gays allowed. We'll work with anybody. But if there's a specific message that conflicts with my convictions, then I can't promote that."

In fact, Adamson has gay employees and says he's worked with gay customers in the past. But in November, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission validated the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization's complaint, arguing, in effect, that if the owner of a printing press declines to promote a message he

disagrees with, it's tantamount to discrimination because gays and lesbians are a protected class of citizens, according to local ordinance. By contrast, Raymond Sexton, executive director of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission, says that a gay printer *could* refuse to print materials promoting Christian events he disagreed with. "That could be legal because it's attacking the message and not the protected class of the individuals in question," Sexton told CitizenLink, a Christian advocacy group. "It's just simply the message."

Apparently, Sexton thinks the free speech rights of one self-identified group are privileged over those of another. But the fact that Sexton is unable to see the duplicitous logic here is almost beside the point. According to Jim Campbell, an ADF lawyer representing Hands On Originals, complaints brought by human rights commissions are rigged from the outset. "Almost certainly the first thing they do is launch an initial investigation, in which case they ask the defendant or respondent for all types of information. They have a lot of statutory authority to do so. . . . They want to know about the operations of the business, past orders filled by the business, things of that nature," says Campbell. "Just going through the process is an overwhelming burden for businesses."

Once the human rights commission's investigation is complete and they decide the complaint is worth pursuing—which is where the Hands On Originals case stands—there's usually an administrative hearing to determine if anyone has been wronged and to levy fines and punishments accordingly. These hearings are simply not credible, because "the commission is the one that both investigates and decides these cases," Campbell says. Aside from being prejudicial, this adds to the burden for the accused. The complaint is prosecuted by the commission, but if charges are brought against you and you want legal representation—which you're probably going to need—you have to pay for your own defense.

In general, these administrative tribunals don't provide the individuals they target with the constitutional protections and evidentiary standards observed in courtrooms. "In many ways they try to mimic [court processes]," says Campbell, noting that they often use legal terminology. But in the end, "Every administrative agency has its own rules and regulations under which it operates. They're very lax in the way that they do things."

So how do you fight back when the deck is so obviously stacked against you? Not to mock ADF's unjustly

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**In 2006, the Arlington County, Virginia, Human Rights Commission filed charges against a local film and video company for refusing a gay group that wanted video duplication services for footage of a gay rights rally.**



dragooned Christian clients, but they might as well pray. If the human rights commission is out to get you, about the only thing to be done is wait it out and accept its punishment. “The problem of having these important constitutional issues stuck in these administrative tribunals results from a Supreme Court decision,” Campbell says. In 1986, the Court heard the case *Ohio Civil Rights Commission v. Dayton Christian Schools, Inc.* “The Court said that a doctrine called the Younger Abstention applied to proceedings before a state human rights tribunal. It’s a doctrine that says a federal court won’t get involved if there’s an ongoing state proceeding that addresses an issue,” Campbell says. “So if someone files a discrimination complaint and thereby invokes a state administrative human rights commission proceeding, you then trap the business owner into the administrative tribunal, and he can’t get into federal court to have his constitutional claims heard.”

Only when you’ve been through the human rights tribunal and exhausted your appeals at the state level will federal courts even consider intervening to protect your constitutional rights. And though human rights commissions were set up with the idea of expediting discrimination claims that would otherwise clog the legal system, bureaucratic inertia has made them excessively drawn out affairs. Campbell also worked on the Ocean Grove case in New Jersey and ruefully notes, “The date the discrimination complaint was filed until the director of the division on Civil Rights issued his final decision was five years and four months. . . . Are we really saying that in our justice system it’s okay to keep someone in a very difficult administrative tribunal, to keep them locked in there for five years, because ultimately they can get into a state court?”

For now, the answer to that question is yes. Once a human rights commission begins proceedings against you, welcome to legal purgatory.

If it seems like the human rights commissions have gotten out of hand, know that the situation can get much, much worse. Just look toward the Great White North, where Canadian human rights commissions exist at the local, provincial, and national level.

In 2002, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission fined the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* and Hugh Owens each \$1,500 because of an ad Owens placed in the paper

that quoted Bible verses condemning homosexuality. In 2008, the Alberta Human Rights Commission ordered evangelical pastor Stephen Boisson to pay \$5,000 to someone offended by his impolitic opinions on homosexuality. That’s not terribly remarkable by the standards of Canadian human rights tribunals. Far more appalling is that the Alberta Human Rights Commission also ruled that Boisson “shall cease publishing in newspapers, by email, on the radio, in public speeches, or on the Internet, in future, disparaging remarks about gays and homosexuals.” (The judgment was finally overturned in 2009.)

And it isn’t just in relation to religious freedom that Canadian human rights tribunals are problematic. They routinely enforce cartoonish notions of political correct-

ness. They’ve taken up the grievance of a cook who was fired for having Hepatitis C; a hairstylist whose coworkers allegedly called him a “loser”; and heard a discrimination case against a rape crisis center for refusing to hire a burly male-to-female transsexual as a counselor of rape victims. The British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal even took up the case of a lesbian who got insulted at a comedy club—it’s only a matter of time before the State Department issues a travel advisory warning to Don Rickles. And if you think the Hands On Originals complaint is groundless, con-

sider that in 1999 a printer was fined \$5,000 by a Canadian human rights commission for refusing to print business cards and letterhead for an organization that archives pro-pedophilia material. The printer spent \$40,000 in legal fees defending himself, to no avail.

Pedophiles notwithstanding, freedom of the press has no real meaning in Canada, either. When Canadian conservative journalist Ezra Levant, publisher of the now online-only *Western Standard*, reprinted the infamous Danish cartoons of Muhammad in 2006 to make a point about press freedom, he was hauled in for questioning. Canadian human rights commissions finally overplayed their hand when a few Muslim law students objected to an article by another prominent conservative journalist, Mark Steyn, in *Maclean’s* magazine titled “The Future Belongs to Islam.” In 2008, Steyn and Canada’s newsweekly of record were called out by the provincial human rights commission. Eventually the case was dropped, but only after Steyn and representatives from *Maclean’s* were forced to endure a lengthy, pointless hearing in a windowless basement in

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**In 1999, a printer was fined \$5,000 by a Canadian human rights commission for refusing to print business cards and letterhead for an organization that archives pro-pedophilia material. The printer spent \$40,000 in legal fees defending himself, to no avail.**

British Columbia. The fact that the charges against Steyn and one of Canada's most prestigious news outlets were dropped only serves to highlight another uncomfortable fact: Over the course of three decades, in all the cases completed by Canadian human rights commissions, not a single entity charged under Canada's Section 13 "hate speech" provisions was ever exonerated.

Then there's the brazen corruption of Canada's human rights regime. An Ottawa lawyer named Richard Warman worked as an investigator for the Canadian Human Rights Commission at the same time he was filing complaints with that body under his own name. His personal complaints were heard before the Canadian Human Rights Commission 12 times, and 12 times the Canadian Human Rights Commission awarded him money—in all, some \$50,000. In 2008, Warman was caught using a stranger's open Wi-Fi connection to post racist comments on a website which he would then use as evidence to charge the site owner with hate speech before the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The unwitting owner of the unprotected Wi-Fi connection was identified in court proceedings as the source of the racist comments, and his name and address were dutifully relayed in newspaper accounts. Naturally, the owner of the Wi-Fi connection wanted to clear his name, and Warman's scheme was exposed.

The good news is that between the Levant, Steyn, and Warman cases, a flood of bad publicity and political pressure rained down on Canadian human rights commissions. In response to this, in 2009 the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal—not to be confused with the Canadian

Human Rights Commission—ruled that Section 13, the source of much of the commission's expansive power, was incompatible with the Canadian charter of rights. Canada's extensive network of human rights commissions is still largely intact, but the number of questionable activities they're engaged in is definitely on the downswing.

By contrast, the activities of U.S. human rights commissions appear to be ramping up, and if you think that Canadian-level corruption can't happen here—it already does. In October, it was revealed that over a five-year period at least 27 Iowa landlords were allowed to make donations to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission in lieu of being brought up on charges. "All 27 complaints and requests for a 'voluntary contribution' to settle the matters were initiated by the commission itself," reported the *Des Moines Register*. "The requests came after sting operations in which representatives of the commission would, for example, pose as prospective tenants and tell landlords over the phone that they needed a service dog for anxiety reasons and quiz them as to whether a pet deposit would apply to them." The *Register* further revealed that all fines assessed by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission go directly to the budget of the commission, instead of to the state's general fund. The Iowa Civil Rights Commission netted close to \$20,000

from the landlord sting operation, and according to the former director of the commission, the state attorney general's office gave its blessing to this way of operating.

This may be legal, but that doesn't change the fact it's extortion. Given the lack of scrutiny and the abundant conflicts of interest—Campbell notes he was shocked to learn that the Lexington human rights commission accepts



Tony Tomelden in front of his prized poster

private donations—it's a pretty safe bet that Iowa doesn't have America's only corrupt human rights commission.

For now, Campbell remains frustrated by the lack of legal avenues to remedy what should be clear constitutional violations. But perhaps the biggest obstacle is lack of public awareness of what's going on—to say nothing of the difficulty of getting those who support human rights commissions in the abstract to think through their real-life consequences. "They're applied in a way that most left-leaning people would look at it and say, 'Okay, I agree with that.' But what the public needs to understand is that the same principles apply on the other side," Campbell says. "Whether you're the African American who doesn't want to promote some white supremacist event, or whether you're a homosexual business owner that doesn't want to print something that says homosexuality is immoral—whatever you are, this could ultimately be turned around on you if these laws are applied fairly."

Tony Tomelden appears to have little in common culturally and otherwise with the evangelical Christians the ADF is defending against human rights commissions. But his pronounced disdain for politics in favor of principle and common sense means Tony ends up making the exact same point as Campbell. Only, as you might expect, he's a bit more irreverent about it. After his encounter with the D.C. Human Rights Office, he says laughing, "I was going to serve White Liberal Punch."

Tony genuinely wishes he could have done more to stand up to the D.C. Human Rights Office. "My dad was a big union guy. He was all about the losing fight," he says, noting his father often went on strike to back up his convictions. "On one hand, it was, 'Oh man, I totally let him down.' I was defending him and all his Asian cousins. At the same time, I have three kids. ... I can't afford a \$10,000 fine. My margins are too small." Still, Tony chafes at the underlying accusations. "There were people calling me a racist and it totally tore my wife apart." Not long after he says this, Erik, the very hygienic Asian who rents space from Tony and operates a ramen restaurant above The Pug, wanders by and overhears Tony discussing the incident with the human rights authorities. "Oh yeah. I was super-offended and almost didn't renew my lease," he

says dryly before wandering out the back of the building.

If any so-called guardians of human rights think they're in a position to punish Tony for being racially insensitive, they would do well to hang out in The Pug for a while and soak up the ambiance. Sure, you might find a rowdy joke about a demonstrably sleazy and racist politician on a chalkboard behind the bar. But that's not all you'll see. As Tony's recounting what happened to him at the hands of the D.C. Human Rights Office, he's seated at a table in The Pug. Behind him on the wall is a four-foot-tall, framed vintage poster with a proposed route for the I-395 highway overlaid on a map of Washington, D.C. The poster says "White Men's Roads Thru Black Men's Homes!" It was part of a campaign in the 1970s to keep the elevated freeway from being built through the heart of town—opponents said it would further segregate the city. The road went in anyway, and the effect on the city was sadly predict-

able. When the location for the new \$700 million publicly financed Washington Nationals baseball stadium was picked a few years back, it was placed in the predominantly black part of southeast D.C., a deliberate attempt to revitalize the community that earlier found itself on the wrong side of the freeway. Tony says he got the poster from a neighbor whose father worked on the unsuccessful

campaign to stop I-395 back in the day. The poster is one of his prized possessions; the only other known copy belongs to the Smithsonian. When it comes to confronting the D.C. government's extensive history of needlessly creating racial discord, it turns out that Tony, like his father before him, is all about the losing fight.

Instead of issuing spurious threats, D.C. leaders interested in civic harmony would do well to pay attention to exactly how Tony runs his establishment and why people love it so much. For one thing, they appreciate his sense of humor. And anyone visiting his bar will find Tony's rather straightforward embrace of diversity—be it in opinions or skin color—there for all to see. The day the man from the D.C. Human Rights Office strode into The Pug and threatened to run Tony out of business, you wonder if, right after delivering the letter explaining Tony was making people feel "objectionable, unwelcome, unacceptable, or undesirable," the official saw the lit sign that hangs permanently over the entrance to the bar. It reads: YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME HERE. ♦



*The other sign at The Pug*



# Coed Combat Units

*A bad idea on all counts*

BY MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS

**F**or over two decades, I have been arguing against the idea of placing American women in combat or in support positions associated with direct ground combat. I base my position on three factors. First, there are substantial physical differences between men and women that place the latter at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to ground combat. Second, men treat women differently than they treat other men. This can undermine the comradeship upon which the unit cohesion necessary to success on the battlefield depends. Finally, the presence of women leads to double standards that seriously erode morale and performance. In other words, men and women are not interchangeable.

## PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES

**T**he average female soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine is about five inches shorter than her male counterpart and has half the upper body strength, lower aerobic capacity (at her physical peak between the ages of 20 and 30, the average woman has the aerobic capacity of a 50-year-old male), and 37 percent less muscle mass. She has a lighter skeleton, which means that the physical strain on her body from carrying the heavy loads that are the lot of the infantryman may cause permanent damage.

But can't these differences be reduced? In the past, gender politics has made it difficult—if not impossible—to

ascertain exactly what can be done to improve the performance of women, because advocates of gender equity understand that the establishment of objective strength criteria would have a deleterious effect on their demand to open the infantry to women. Several years ago, the Army attempted to establish such strength standards and pretests for each military occupational specialty, but those efforts were abandoned when studies showed that not enough women would meet the standards proposed for many Army jobs. Funding

subsequently was denied for a study about remedial strength training for women.

Anatomical differences between men and women are as important as strength differences. A woman cannot urinate standing up. Most important, she tends, particularly if she is under the age of 30 (as are 60 percent of female military personnel) to become pregnant.

Indeed, each year, somewhere between 10 and 17 percent of servicewomen become pregnant. In certain locales, the figure is even higher. Former senator James Webb noted that when he was secretary of the Navy in 1988, 51 percent of single Air Force and 48 percent of single Navy women stationed in Iceland were pregnant. During pregnancy (if she remains

in the service at all), a woman must be exempted from progressively more routine duties, such as marching, field training, and swim tests. After the baby is born, there are more problems, as exemplified by the many thousand uniformed-service mothers, none of whom fairly could be called a frontline soldier.

Women also suffer a higher rate of attrition than men from physical ailments, and because of the turnover, are a more costly investment. Women are four times more likely to report ill, and the percentage of women being medically nonavailable at any time is twice that of men. If a



RUSSELL LEE, U.S. ARMY

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woman can't do her job, someone else must do it for her.

If one doesn't believe me, perhaps one should look at an article by a Marine officer, Captain Katie Petronio, in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, the Corps's professional journal ("Get Over It! We Are Not All Created Equal"). She noted the physical deterioration she suffered during her deployment to Afghanistan as a combat engineer officer:

It was evident that stress and muscular deterioration was affecting everyone regardless of gender; however, the rate of my deterioration was noticeably faster than that of male Marines and further compounded by gender-specific medical conditions. At the end of the 7-month deployment . . . I had lost 17 pounds and was diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome (which personally resulted in infertility, but is not a genetic trend in my family), which was brought on by the chemical and physical changes endured during deployment. Regardless of my deteriorating physical stature, I was extremely successful during both of my combat tours, serving beside my infantry brethren and gaining the respect of every unit I supported. Regardless, I can say with 100 percent assurance that despite my accomplishments, there is no way I could endure the physical demands of the infantrymen whom I worked beside as their combat load and constant deployment cycle would leave me facing medical separation long before the option of retirement. I understand that everyone is affected differently; however, I am confident that should the Marine Corps attempt to fully integrate women into the infantry, we as an institution are going to experience a colossal increase in crippling and career-ending medical conditions for females. [[www.mca-marines.org/gazette/article/get-over-it-we-are-not-all-created-equal](http://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/article/get-over-it-we-are-not-all-created-equal)]

## MEN AND WOMEN

**T**he key to success on the battlefield is unit cohesion, which all research has shown to be critically important. Advocates of opening combat specialties to women have tried to change the definition of cohesion over the years, but the best remains that of the 1992 report of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces: "the relationship that develops in a unit or group where (1) members share common values and experiences; (2) individuals in the group conform to group norms and behavior in order to ensure group survival and goals; (3) members lose their identity in favor of a group identity; (4) members focus on group activities and goals; (5) unit members become totally dependent on each other for the completion of their mission or survival; and (6) group members . . . meet all the standards of performance and behavior in order not to threaten group survival."

The glue of unit cohesion is what the Greeks called *philia*—friendship, comradeship, or brotherly love. In *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, J. Glenn Gray described the importance of *philia*: "Numberless soldiers have died, more or less willingly, not for country or

honor or religious faith or for any other abstract good, but because they realized that by fleeing their post and rescuing themselves, they would expose their companions to greater danger. Such loyalty to the group is the essence of fighting morale. . . . Comrades are loyal to each other spontaneously and without any need for reasons."

The Greeks identified another form of love: *eros*. Unlike *philia*, *eros* is individual and exclusive. *Eros* manifests itself as sexual competition, protectiveness, and favoritism. The presence of women in the close confines of a combat unit unleashes *eros* at the expense of *philia*. As the late Charles Moskos, the great military sociologist, once commented, "when you put men and women together in a confined environment and shake vigorously, don't be surprised if sex occurs. When the military says there can be no sex between a superior and a subordinate, that just flies in the face of reality. You can't make a principle based on a falsehood." Mixing the sexes and thereby introducing *eros* into an environment based on *philia* creates a dangerous form of friction in the military.

The destructive effect on unit cohesion of amorous relationships can be denied only by ideologues. Does a superior order his or her beloved into danger? If he or she demonstrates favoritism, what are the consequences for unit morale and discipline? What happens when jealousy rears its head? These are questions of life and death.

Feminists contend that these manifestations of *eros* are the result only of a lack of education and insensitivity to women, and can be eradicated through indoctrination. But all the social engineering in the world cannot change the fact that men treat women differently than they treat other men.

## DOUBLE STANDARDS

**T**he physical differences between men and women have, unfortunately, all too often caused the military to, in effect, discard the very essence of *philia*: fairness and the absence of favoritism. This is the crux of the problem. As Webb has observed, "In [the military] environment, fairness is not only crucial, it is the coin of the realm." The military ethos is dependent on the understanding that the criteria for allocating danger and recognition, both positive and negative, are essentially objective.

Favoritism and double standards are deadly to *philia* and the associated phenomena—cohesion, morale, discipline—that are critical to the success of a military organization. Not surprisingly, double standards generate resentment on the part of military men, which in turn leads to cynicism about military women in general, including those who have not benefited from a double standard and who perform their duties with distinction.

The military has created two types of double standards. The first is the tendency to allow women, but not men, to take advantage of sexual differences. For instance, morale, trust, and cohesion have suffered from the perception among military men that women can use pregnancy to avoid duty or deployments. A very contentious debate over favoritism arose some years ago over the claim that some women had been permitted to advance in flight training with performances that would have caused a man to wash out.

The second type of double standard is based on differing physical requirements. Last week, after Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that the ban on women in combat would be lifted, my good friend, retired Air Force general Charlie Dunlap, a former JAG and the director of Duke Law School's Center on Law, Ethics and National Security, weighed in: "Secretary Panetta's decision to lift the ban on women serving in certain combat roles makes sense so long as there is no lowering of the physical or other standards required for the new positions."

The trouble is that the desire for equal *opportunity* is, in practice, usually translated into a demand for equal *results*. Consequently, there has been a watering down of standards to accommodate the generally lower physical capabilities of women. This has had two consequences.

First, standards have been reduced so much that, in many cases, service members no longer are being prepared for the strenuous challenges they will face in the fleet or field. Second—and even more destructive of morale and trust—is the fact that when the requirement can't be changed and the test cannot be eliminated, scores are "gender normed" to conceal the differences between men and women. All the services have lower physical standards for women than for men. Two decades ago, the U.S. Military Academy identified 120 physical differences between men and women, not to mention psychological ones, that resulted in a less rigorous overall program of physical

training at West Point in order to accommodate female cadets.

For instance, the "USMA Report on the Integration and Performance of Women at West Point," prepared for the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services in February 1992, revealed that scores for physically demanding events were gender normed at the academy: A woman could receive an A for the same performance that would earn a man a D. Navy women can achieve the mini-

mum score on the physical readiness test by performing 11 percent fewer sit-ups and 53 percent fewer push-ups and by running 1.5 miles 27 percent more slowly than men. There is immense political pressure to prevent women from failing to meet even these reduced standards.

To argue against women in combat is not to deny the significant contributions women have made to the nation's defense. For the last century, women have served honorably, competently, and bravely during this country's wars. It is my experience that the vast majority of women in today's armed forces are extremely professional and want nothing to do with the two extremes of feminism that Jean Bethke Elshtain described several years ago in *Real Politics: At*

*the Center of Everyday Life* and that the military spends time and effort trying to appease: the "feminist victimization wing" and the "repressive androgynists."

I doubt that there is a huge push on the part of female soldiers and Marines to join the infantry. Captain Petronio makes the same point. The impetus comes instead from professional feminists still living in the 1970s and a small number of female officers who believe that serving in the infantry will increase the likelihood that they will become generals. But the Pentagon itself points out that military women are already promoted at rates equal to or faster than men.

In short, there is no reason for this change. It doesn't make the military stronger, and risks making it weaker by undermining the factors crucial for combat effectiveness. ♦



MIKE KAPLAN, U.S. AIR FORCE



# Delay, Repeal, Replace

*The Obamacare fight has just begun*

BY JAMES C. CAPRETTA  
& JEFFREY H. ANDERSON

Watching Congress take the final steps to pass Obamacare in March 2010 was a bitterly disappointing moment for the law's opponents. They didn't have to be told that what was being rammed through the House and Senate was the largest power grab by the federal government in at least a generation, with immense consequences for the nation's economic vitality and political health. Opponents understandably

that the law's centerpiece, the individual mandate, was constitutional (but only as a "tax"), and President Obama beat back the campaign of former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, securing a second term. As a consequence, outright repeal is off the table for at least four years.

Disappointing as these events were, they do not remotely constitute the end of the fight to repeal and replace Obamacare. Indeed, this is a fight conservatives couldn't walk away from even if they wanted to, because health policy is absolutely central to the struggle over the size and scope of governmental power. If Obamacare remains on the books, the federal government will become the dominant actor in nearly one-fifth of the American economy, tens of millions

more Americans will become dependent on taxpayer support for their health care, the quality of American medicine will decline, and the spending commitments in the law will increase the pressure for ever-higher taxes—even as they add to the risk of national insolvency.

So the fight must go on. The only question, at this point, is how to proceed.

Already, 25 of the 50 states have declared, as is their prerogative under the 2,700-page law, that they will refuse to set up Obamacare health-insurance exchanges. Another 7 states have said that they will administer some regulatory aspects of the exchanges but will leave the bulk of the work of determining eligibility for the new subsidies to the federal government. Only 18 states plus the District of Columbia are planning to take on the full responsibility for the administration of Obamacare.

Steadfast resistance by so many states is a welcome and important development. In addition to the signal that such resistance sends, Congress hasn't authorized funding for the federally run Obamacare exchanges that would operate in place of state-based ones. Moreover, the plain language of the hastily cobbled-together law—which the administration is ignoring for the moment—says that taxpayer-financed subsidies can only be funneled through state-based exchanges, and not through federal ones. (Legal challenges are proceeding on this front.)

In addition to opting out of establishing the exchanges, states can also refuse to implement Obamacare's massive



March 23, 2013: The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act becomes law.

redoubled their efforts to see the law repealed and replaced, and Republicans rode the popular revolt against the excesses of Obamacare all the way to a landslide midterm victory.

Unfortunately, the two best opportunities to stop the law in its tracks were missed. At the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Roberts twisted himself into a pretzel to conclude

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expansion of Medicaid. The Supreme Court opened up this option by striking down the law's onerous penalties on states that decline to raise the income cutoff for Medicaid eligibility by 33 percent, as Obamacare prescribes. Current Medicaid beneficiaries are all-too-frequently badly served by the program, so GOP governors are on firm ground when they argue that no expansion should take place without fundamental reforms. And if no reforms are forthcoming, then Obamacare's coverage expansions will fall well short of what was promised.

Beyond these encouraging developments in the states, however, there are two proposals that Republicans should embrace in the early months of 2013 to help destabilize Obamacare and lay the foundation for its eventual replacement. First, congressional Republicans should push for a delay in Obamacare's implementation. Second, the party should unite behind, and persuasively advance, a credible and practical replacement plan—for one cannot replace Obamacare without offering a replacement.

Obama will never willingly sign anything that delays the implementation of his namesake, so delaying its onset would almost certainly require pushing him into accepting a delay as part of larger budget negotiations. According to estimates produced by one of us and former Congressional Budget Office director Douglas Holtz-Eakin, simply delaying the implementation of Obamacare by two years (until January 2016) would cut deficits by about \$200 billion.

This would be a popular pitch for Republicans to make to the American people: *We will cut the deficit by \$200 billion and will also keep you from having to live under Obamacare for another two years.* That's a win-win for the American people. As such, it's a pitch congressional Republicans should make—and it's a price its members should make Obama pay to get what he wants in the budget process.

Delaying the implementation of Obamacare would be important for three reasons: It would save hundreds of billions of dollars in federal spending. It would spare Americans from having their health care premiums spike until a somewhat later date. And it would move the onset of Obamacare much closer to the 2016 presidential election, which would put Obama's centerpiece legislation at center stage in that race—as the future health of the nation demands that it be.

Of course, this is the last thing that Obama wants, but he may not have much choice in the matter. Once a possible delay gets floated by Republicans in Congress, it could gather momentum. Many governors, including some Democrats,

are likely to support such a move because they see a train wreck coming in 2014 and are eager to avoid it. Moreover, many businesses, including insurers, would support a delay because they know the government is not remotely ready to implement Obamacare on schedule. Even a one-year delay would pay dividends in all of the ways listed above.

Beyond resisting and delaying the implementation of Obamacare, the most important thing for the GOP at this point is to develop and unite behind a practical replacement proposal—one that will actually solve the very real problems plaguing American health care. While Obama-

care's failings will undoubtedly further energize popular opposition in the years after its implementation, that opposition alone is unlikely to be strong enough to result in its full repeal in the absence of a plausible replacement. Americans want reform of some sort to address the issues of preexisting conditions, rapidly rising costs, and unstable and insecure insurance for tens of millions of their fellow citizens. Obamacare's opponents can win this fight—but only if they're willing to do the hard and often complex work of developing an alternative that offers solutions to

these concerns without imposing Obamacare's excessive costs and heavy-handed governmental controls.

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**Under Obamacare, the federal government will dominate a fifth of the economy, tens of millions more Americans will be dependent on taxpayers for their health care, the quality of medicine will decline, and pressure will rise for ever-higher taxes—even at the risk of national insolvency.**

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A credible alternative to Obamacare must start with a plan to address the issue of preexisting conditions. As matters stand today, it is possible for families to stay continuously insured and yet, when moving from employer-provided insurance to the individual market, still face sky-high premiums because a child has a genetic condition or a spouse has battled cancer. That strikes most Americans as fundamentally unfair. Fixing this problem, however, does not require a full federal takeover of the health system. New regulations, recommended federally but implemented by the states, could give Americans new protections if they stay continuously insured. In practical terms, Americans should be able to move seamlessly between employer-based coverage and individually owned insurance without being subjected to high premiums based on the development of a costly health condition. Making this work will require additional funding from the federal government for state-based high-risk pools. As for those who haven't remained continuously insured, a onetime buy-in could allow them

to purchase insurance at below-market price, with high-risk funding being used to offset part of those costs.

Of course, to stay continuously insured, families need to have realistic and affordable options. This, in turn, requires fixing the unfairness in the tax code. Since World War II, the federal tax code has been heavily biased toward job-based insurance. As a result, those without access to employer plans have a very difficult time finding affordable insurance. In reforming the insurance market, Republicans should end the tax code's discrimination against those outside of the employer-based system. There's no reason why Americans who get their insurance through their employer should get a tax break, while those who buy it on the open market should not. To address this unfairness, a replacement to Obamacare should provide a tax credit to households that don't have access to tax-subsidized, employer-based coverage. Such a credit should be equal to about \$2,500 for individuals or \$5,000 for families and could only be used to offset the costs of health insurance premiums or deposited into a health savings account. By adopting such reforms, Republicans would fix what the federal government broke, rather than giving it control of the entire health care system.

Such reforms would also reinforce a third element of a credible replacement program: a move away from open-ended health care subsidization by the federal government. These open-ended commitments by the government are fiscally unsustainable, and they are a central factor in driving up health costs. Instead of today's open-ended subsidies, Republicans should champion an approach that substitutes fixed financial support for insurance—a "defined-contribution" model, if you will. Importantly, this would mean providing a fixed amount of support for purchasing health insurance, not a fixed amount for care. No one would be cut off after the cost of their care passed a certain cost threshold. Instead, each person would receive a fixed amount of federal financial support, perhaps adjusted to reflect health status or income, for use toward the purchase of health insurance of his or her choice.

The primary problem in American health care is that it operates without the discipline of a properly functioning marketplace. The federal government's subsidies in Medicare and Medicaid, and its tax subsidies to employer plans, are open-ended and increase when costs rise. This undercuts the incentive for price-shopping and for judicious use of resources. To inject market discipline into health care, consumers must be cost-conscious. For instance, with a fixed federal tax credit for insurance, consumers would have strong incentives to purchase low-premium plans because any premium above the credit amount would come out of their pockets and not from taxpayers. Similar reforms are necessary in Medicare and Medicaid.

Such reforms are the key to promoting a genuine health care market in America. Some of this would cost money, to be sure, but it would be a pittance compared with Obamacare—and thus would save extraordinary sums in comparison to the cost of keeping that colossally expensive overhaul on the books. Moreover, much of the cost of the tax credits could be offset by capping the tax preference for employer-paid insurance at a level where it would fully cover the cost of an average plan but not of an expensive one.

If Republicans were to advance a replacement along these lines—a plan that would provide stable insurance options, consumer choice, and high-quality health care without the heavy-handed mandates and regulations of Obamacare—the American people would be more than happy to throw Obamacare overboard.

The key to turning back the singular threat that Obamacare poses to our liberty and fiscal solvency is for the GOP to have a plan of attack that extends across the next four or five years. Opponents of Obamacare (which still includes most Americans) should be vigorous in their opposition in the coming weeks and months. But those efforts should be focused on the end game of replacing Obamacare with something different and far better—and that will require winning the presidency. Therefore, the closer the initial ill-effects of Obamacare can be pushed toward 2016, the better the chances for replacement.

Even those Republicans who might otherwise be inclined to capitulate on this issue should realize that the fight is far from over and must be won. As Yuval Levin wrote in these pages shortly after President Obama broke enough arms to push Obamacare through Congress on a strictly partisan basis:

[Obamacare] is not even a liberal approach to escalating costs but a ticking time bomb: a scheme that will build up pressure in our private insurance system while offering no escape. . . . Once implemented fully, it would fairly quickly force a crisis that would require another significant reform. Liberals would seek to use that crisis, or the prospect of it, to move the system toward the approach they wanted in the first place.

In other words, Obamacare is a way station, and there are two possible destinations: It will be replaced either with a freer system that will lower costs and increase the quality of care, or else with fully socialized medicine of the kind that liberals have long desired. Obama himself, when he first began campaigning for national office in 2003, declared, "I happen to be a proponent of a 'single-payer,' universal health care program." The only thing now standing between Americans and Obama's goal is a strategic, savvy, and determined commitment by Obamacare's opponents to replace it with real reform.



The fight won't be easy, but opponents of Obamacare have some big advantages. As Obamacare begins to require that insurers cover all comers at the same price (regardless of their health status and hence the actual cost of their care), insurance premiums will skyrocket for large numbers of currently insured Americans. Many millions of others will lose their employer-based insurance (with some of them being dumped into Medicaid at taxpayer expense), and many millions of seniors will lose their Medicare Advantage plans. In direct contradiction to what President Obama repeatedly promised, Americans will soon realize two things: Obamacare will cause health costs to rise, not fall; and just because they like their health plans, that doesn't mean they'll get to keep them.

Since Obamacare will mandate that businesses with at least 50 workers provide insurance to all "full-time" employees—defined under the overhaul as those who work at least 30 hours a week—the 49-employee business and the 29-hour week will both become commonplace. Thus, the overhaul's drag on the economy will become all the more apparent and undeniable. Furthermore, many businesses and charitable organizations will continue to fight Obamacare's requirement compelling them to offer only those health plans that provide "free" access to contraception, sterilization,

and the abortion drug ella, while many of their employees won't appreciate having their choices limited solely to such Obama-approved plans.

Federal spending on Obamacare will start to rise rapidly. Obamacare's myriad taxes will begin to kick in. Medicare spending will be cut, or else (if that is averted) deficits will rise even further. The combination of millions of newly insured patients and a worsening primary-care shortage will cause emergency rooms to become swamped. And, of course, American citizens will, for the first time in our history, be forced to buy a product of the federal government's choosing—or else pay a noncompliance tax.

As a result, Obamacare will likely become even less popular than it is already, and Americans will likely be even more open to a credible replacement. If opponents are ready to present and fight for such a plan over the coming years, then the cloud of Obamacare's adoption may yet come with a very attractive silver lining: the eventual adoption of a market-based, patient-centered, decentralized reform plan that delivers better care at lower cost to the American people—in harmony with the country's founding principles. The battle to replace Obamacare will not be easy. But it's unavoidable, and the benefits of an ultimate victory will be well worth the price. ♦

## End Debt Ceiling Fights by Controlling Spending

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The simplest way to prevent endless fights over increases to the debt ceiling is to reach an agreement on spending. Easier said than done.

While both sides appear committed to preventing a default of the U.S. government, they have yet to address what's driving the endless debt increases in the first place—overspending.

Our debts and deficits are piling up fast. In fact, we've already blown through the last \$2.1 trillion debt ceiling increase in just 17 months. How much longer can we keep this up before the house of cards collapses?

Some folks say that we can tax our way out of this problem. Not possible. Ending all the upper income tax cuts will pay for just nine days of annual spending. Nine days. You could confiscate 100% of the earnings of couples making more than \$1 million and still not come anywhere close to solving

our deficit problem. The recent fiscal cliff deal pairs major tax hikes with virtually no spending cuts. No amount of new revenue or higher taxes can solve our fiscal challenges without real spending controls.

So it's time to face reality. The entitlement programs written and designed for an earlier era must be revised. According to the Congressional Budget Office, virtually 100% of the projected increase in budget deficits over the next 75 years comes from rising Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other mandatory spending. If left unchecked, this spending will soon consume every dollar the federal government collects, leaving nothing for education, national defense, or other essential programs.

Let me point out that we're not talking about cuts in absolute terms—we're simply talking about slowing the rate of increase. This can be achieved with reasonable

adjustments phased in over a number of years.

Let's face another reality—we need to raise the debt ceiling. Even suggesting that we could default is playing with fire. Businesses would be more reluctant to hire and invest. Our AAA credit rating would be at risk. An actual default would be a disaster, destroying the full faith and credit of the United States, spiking interest rates, and creating massive economic uncertainty.

Congress and the president must use a short-term extension of the debt ceiling to negotiate spending cuts and entitlement reform that will restore fiscal balance and put us on a sounder financial footing. It's no exaggeration to say that the country's economic future depends on it.



**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
Comment at [FreeEnterprise.com](http://FreeEnterprise.com).

# Look and Learn

Camille Paglia  
on the best  
of the West.

BY ELISE PASSAMANI

In this hugely informative and highly entertaining study, Camille Paglia argues that to survive in our frenetic visual environment, we need to refocus our eyes on the sculptures and paintings and other works that compose the sweeping artistic patrimony of the West. As she notes, “Looking at art requires stillness and receptivity, which realign our senses and produce a magical tranquility.”

She reports with some urgency on the impoverished state of the fine arts and art education, condemning the weakness (and absence) of art history surveys in schools and colleges, and pointing out that students in the humanities “graduate with little sense of chronology or the gorgeous procession of styles that constitutes Western art.” And she highlights an even more distressing problem: The elite contemporary art world sneers at religion, relies on shock value, and “has no big ideas left.”

Paglia’s antidote to this nothingness is to contemplate individual works

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*‘Venus with a Mirror’ (ca. 1555) by Titian*

**Glittering Images**  
*A Journey Through Art  
from Egypt to Star Wars*  
by Camille Paglia  
Pantheon, 202 pp., \$30

of art one-by-one, and, by doing this again and again, to develop an eye and understand and appreciate real achievement. To this end, her book is a collection of 29 essays about particular works of art and the artists who made them. In each essay, she provides the historical context of the work, biographical information about the artist and subject, the names of other artists who have been influenced by the work, and

her own observations about why it continues to be of interest.

*Glittering Images* is similar to Paglia’s 2005 poetry compendium, *Break, Blow, Burn*, and her teaching experience shines in this format. Essentially, the book is a meticulously assembled survey course, accompanied by beautiful, full-color reproductions, and permeated with her clarity and wealth of knowledge. And the range of works is enormous: She leads the reader on “A Journey Through Art from Egypt to *Star Wars*” by way of ancient Greece, the Italian Renaissance, the Baroque period, and Art Deco, to name only a handful of the eras she discusses.

The question that guides Paglia’s

editorial choices is “What lasts, and why?” and although she covers so much ground in great detail, the book is very readable, almost dishy. And full of surprising artwork. After reading the first chapter, about the tomb of the Egyptian queen Nefertari, you turn the page to discover a photograph of an unexpectedly modern marble statue with a long, graceful neck. It is one of the Cycladic idols (ca. 2800-2300 B.C.), which are Bronze Age figurines in white marble that were discovered in the Cyclades, an island chain in the Aegean. Paglia notes that they “carry an invigorating sense of the future. Even in their rightful positions on their backs, they are gazing skyward toward some other order—not necessarily a supreme deity but the shifting pattern of bright stars.” They primarily depict women and came to inspire a variety of modern artists, including Picasso, Modigliani, and Henry Moore.

Next, she calls our attention to the Charioteer of Delphi (ca. 475 B.C.), a bronze sculpture of a handsome athlete with inlaid eyes of onyx in white enamel. It originally formed part of a larger work, complete with chariot, horses, and grooms. According to Paglia, “the Charioteer of Delphi represents a stillness of perception, a peak moment where an exceptional person has become a work of art, the focus of all eyes, human and divine,” and he personifies the idea that “the beautiful and the good” are one and the same. She asks of Titian’s nude goddess in *Venus with a Mirror* (ca. 1555), “Is Venus awaking from mourning for her young lover, Adonis? . . . Hence perhaps Venus’s surprise here as she rediscovers her own beauty and, meeting our eyes in the mirror, resolves to live again.” Thus, she points out the regenerative power in seeing a beautiful face, illustrating how “the hushed spectacle of a woman gazing into her mirror has exerted a powerful fascination on male artists.”

Paglia captures Anthony van Dyck’s portrait (ca. 1638) of the cousins of Charles I in a sentence: “Lords John and Bernard Stuart, young English bucks dressed at the height of fashion, strike

a pose at the foot of a dark staircase”; but she adds with some poignancy that these glamorous young men would be killed in the English Civil War a few years after the picture was painted. Apparently, “Women often seem placid or generic in van Dyck’s portraits, while powerful or handsome men radiate charisma.”

The full effect of Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger (O.J.)* (1907) is lost in reproduction, since the painting itself, “an experiment in black magic,” is eight feet tall. It is a portrait of five prostitutes in a brothel, and in discussing it, Paglia conveys a strong sense of Picasso’s artistic output and personality:

These statuesque demoiselles, crowding the flat picture plane, are Picasso’s carnal Muses, patrons of his genius and titanic productivity. (He left fifty thousand works in a vast range of genres and materials.) In real life, one woman would never be enough for him. . . . Mutating through many faces, they are the models for the restlessly mercurial styles of his long career. He cannot conquer them, but their intense gaze conveys that they are choosing him, and only him.

Another, less well-known entry is Tamara de Lempicka’s elegant portrait of *Doctor Boucard* (1929). Explaining the artist’s small museum presence, Paglia writes:

Most of her paintings are privately owned, often by movie stars, which has compromised her reputation among art critics. Performers identify with the theatricality of her portraits, which confer glamour and status. In contrast, the favorite woman artist of mainstream feminism is Frida Kahlo, because of her folkloric themes, her militant Communism, her marital humiliations, and her ailments, accidents, and surgeries, which she graphically detailed in grisly paintings of symbolic martyrdom.

In her last essay, Paglia claims that “no one has closed the gap between art and technology more successfully than George Lucas.” The only work of film she includes is the volcanic

duel between Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi at the end of Lucas’s *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* (2005). The scenery is Lucas’s version of hell, and Paglia lauds it as “sublime elemental poetry.” The special effects, craftsmanship, and choreography that went into filming this one particular scene—including specially shot footage of Mount Etna erupting—are staggering. It ends as Anakin Skywalker “crawls like a serpent with demonic yellow eyes before he catches fire and is half-incinerated,” all but finishing the character’s metamorphosis into Darth Vader.

It is curious that Camille Paglia deems George Lucas to be the “world’s greatest living artist,” even when he has purveyed a good deal of the kind of “constant flashing or strobing” effect that she warns “fatigues the eye and may impede small children’s cognitive development.” Surely this conflict isn’t an accident, but is rather the strongest aesthetic judgment she makes in the entire book, and can be read as a scathing indictment of contemporary art.

Paglia’s concerns about the well-being and teaching of children echo what Edith Wharton wrote on the same subject over a century ago in her first book, *The Decoration of Houses* (1897). Although Wharton couldn’t have imagined the animation and video games that now clamor for our attention, she insisted of rooms designed for children:

Above all, the walls should not be overcrowded. The importance of preserving in the school-room bare wall-spaces of uniform tint has hitherto been little considered; but teachers are beginning to understand the value of these spaces in communicating to the child’s brain a sense of repose which diminishes mental and physical restlessness.

Paglia herself writes that “the odd class field trip to a museum, even if one is within reach, is inadequate,” mirroring Wharton’s assertion, “Parents may conscientiously send their children to galleries and museums, but unless the child can find some point of contact between its own surroundings and the contents of the galleries, the interest excited by the pictures and statues



will be short-lived and ineffectual.”

*Glittering Images* represents such a point of contact. The numerous color reproductions are so enchanting that they encourage you to pause and linger, to flip backwards and forwards between the pages for pure enjoyment. It is wonderful as a picture book for schoolchildren, regardless of their reading level. Paglia surely had this in mind when assembling

the illustrations: “All parents who can afford it should have at least one art book lying around the house for children to encounter on their own.” And again, Edith Wharton would agree: “To teach a child to distinguish between a good and a bad painting, a well or an ill-modeled statue,” she wrote, “will at least develop those habits of observation and comparison that are the base of all sound judgments.” ♦

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## Red Dawn

*Why the Bolshevik Revolution wasn't 'strangled in its cradle.'* BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD



*Million Man March at the Kremlin, November 1917*

**W**hen everything changes, what should be done?

Over 30 years after Ayatollah Khomeini lit the Islamic fire, the West is still fumbling its way to a proper response. Imagine, then, the challenge posed by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. A key partner in the Allied war against Germany had just been hijacked by a fanatical cult intent on remaking the world, and the

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### Spies and Commissars

*The Early Years of the Russian Revolution*

by Robert Service

PublicAffairs, 480 pp., \$32.99

world had no clue what to do in reply.

That's the background to this fine new work by Robert Service, a distinguished historian of Soviet communism perhaps best known for his biographies of Lenin and Trotsky, two monsters brought to unusually vivid life in these pages. Here's Trotsky, flirting with Clare Sheridan (Winston

Churchill's embarrassing first cousin, as it happens) as she sculpts his bust in the Kremlin, and there's Lenin, “shortish, pedantic and impatient. With his thumbs tucked into his waistcoat, he seemed at times like an angry Sunday preacher.”

This is a deftly drawn book, illuminated by the author's eye for detail, ear for a good quote, and nose for a ripping yarn.

And what a yarn it is. The *ancien régime* is no more. We are given a quick look at the deposed and imprisoned Czar Nicholas, the most prominent, if far from the most important, of all the “former people” (to borrow the chilling Bolshevik phrase), reading “Turgenev ... [and] anti-Semitic tracts.” Meanwhile, the armies of his kinsman, the Kaiser, are tearing chunks off what once was the Russian Empire, before dissolving into confusion after defeat on the Western Front.

All is flux. The territory controlled by the Bolsheviks shrinks and grows in a mirror image of the tides of a vast, bloody, and chaotic civil war, and the Kremlin's efforts to export its revolution to Warsaw and beyond. National independence movements rise and fall. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania get clean away (for now), Ukraine and Georgia are not so lucky. Hovering uncertainly on the fringes are troops dispatched to Russia by its erstwhile allies in the hope that they might somehow reverse the worst of the revolution. They were never able to do so.

Service gives an excellent overview of this bewildering series of conflicts, and of the dawn of revolution as a whole, but this is just the frame for his picture of a country where nothing was as it had been and everything was up for grabs. Older, more genteel techniques of influencing events no longer worked. Traditional diplomacy was dead.

But both Russia and its revolution were too big to ignore. Although foreign governments may have dithered, some of their citizens did not. It is around their stories that Service shapes his narrative. The Bolsheviks might have thought that they were steering immense, impersonal, and unstoppable historical forces, but the new world

GETTY IMAGES

that they created was so fluid and so fragile that the individual could, and did, make a difference.

There were the true believers—early fellow travelers not just along for the ride but eager to speed it on its way—such as the American journalists John Reed and Louise Bryant, and, more equivocally, the Briton Arthur Ransome. Reed, the author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, ended up an honored corpse beneath the Kremlin walls; Bryant, his widow, was subsequently married (for a while) to the man later appointed the first American ambassador to the Soviet Union. Ransome became a much-loved children's writer (*Swallows and Amazons* and similarly wholesome fare) and a less-loved husband of one of Trotsky's former secretaries.

Not so idealistic, but in some ways no less credulous, were the prospectors among the rubble, the entrepreneurs and con men who saw the collapse of Russian capitalism as a business opportunity. And then there are the real heroes of this book, the remarkable band of (mainly) British or British-sponsored adventurers who did what they could to overturn Bolshevik rule.

While a small British expeditionary force gathered in the far north, His Majesty's irregulars set to work in Moscow. At least three of them—Sidney Reilly, Paul Dukes, and George Hill—could, notes Service, “have supplied inspiration for James Bond.” No martinis, but in just one paragraph we read about Reilly's involvement with Yelizaveta. And Dagmara. And Olga. We also read about that clever and unconventional thrill-seeker, Robert Bruce Lockhart, designated “Head of the British Mission” and the ideal agent-diplomat for a place where the rules of diplomacy had broken down. Between romances, Bruce Lockhart plotted coups. And the Britons were not alone: Uncle Sam was represented by the more staid, but not ineffective, “Information” Service, run by the marvelously named Xenophon Dmitrievich de Blumenthal Kalamatiano, a one-man tribute both to American's melting pot and its enterprise.

If all this sounds like the stuff of

John Buchan, only more so, that's because it is. This is a story with room for Latvian riflemen, Czech Legionnaires, and a Polish Women's Death Battalion; for failed revolutions across Europe, for conspiracies and spies, and for the daredevil aviator Merian Cooper, one of the American volunteers in an air squadron that helped Poland beat off Bolshevik invasion. (“Coop” was shot down but escaped after 10 months of Soviet captivity. A decade-and-a-half later, he coproduced, cowrote, and codirected *King Kong*.)

For all the tales of derring-do, however, it's impossible to read this book without sadness and frustration. This was a tragedy that could have been cut short. Winston Churchill, a minister in the British government during this period, argued for more to be done against the Reds. He understood what his cousin Clare Sheridan did not: that this terrible infant revolution needed to be “strangled in its cradle.” Not for the last time in his career, too few listened until it was too late.

To some Western leaders, Bolshevism was a spasm that would pass. Russia's counterrevolutionary armies—the Whites—would prevail with just a little support from the West; or maybe Bolshevism, an onslaught on human

nature itself, would simply collapse, or be overthrown in its own heartlands. Others, not unreasonably, feared that their own, already war-weary peoples would be driven to revolt by the prospect of participating in what many were bound to see as a bosses' crusade against a bright, brave experiment.

So, denied the outside assistance that might have made a difference, the Whites were overwhelmed, beaten by an enemy that, in the end, proved more cohesive and determined than they were. The undersized and ultimately irrelevant Allied detachments—primarily French, Japanese, American, and British—slunk home from their beachheads, but the Western statesmen told themselves not to worry: Trade would blunt Leninist rigor, and a *cordon sanitaire* of new East-Central European states would keep Bolshevism confined to its birthplace.

Less than a quarter of a century later, the Red Army was in Berlin. As for His Majesty's irregulars, most resumed lives of quieter distinction, but the (probably) Ukrainian-born Sidney Reilly (né Rosenblum) continued to fight. Lured back to the Soviet Union in an elaborate sting operation, he fell into the hands of the secret police, and, like millions to come, was killed. ♦

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## Cabin Fever

*The creative sensation at the MacDowell Colony.*

BY EVA TALMADGE

**W***Peterborough, N.H.*  
*wednesday, June 6:* The email notifying me of my acceptance to the MacDowell Colony could not have come at a better time. I've just begun writing a new short story—one so new I'm still writing it in

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longhand, sitting in coffee shops drinking too-strong coffee that I can't really afford. And I'm having one of those days (every other day) where I find myself adding up the number of hours of freelance work I'd need to do to pay back everyone to whom I owe large sums of money, plus the credit card, minus the value of my collection of potentially resalable hardcover books. I have nothing to look forward to.

Except this: The subject line reads

"Confidential Application Results," and the message opens with an earnest "Congratulations!" I'm so happy I might as well have been told I've just won the Pulitzer Prize. "Your new work is good," the email means. "Keep going."

By the time I receive confirmation of the exact dates of my residency, I've decided to turn my new short story into a novel. The day of my departure looms in my calendar like a deadline—encouraging, motivational, firm. I decide to make it the day I finish a complete first draft. By the time I arrive in Peterborough, New Hampshire, three months later, I've written 41,000 words.

*Friday, October 5:* First day. Residents at MacDowell are given private dormitory rooms in which to sleep, isolated studios in which to do their work, and three nourishing meals each day. Dinners are served family-style, and I'm so apprehensive about meeting my fellow colonists that I sign out of dinner altogether and depart for a nearby restaurant. I've arrived with a boyfriend I'm not quite ready to say goodbye to, and eating with a group of creative strangers (at least one of whom has actually won a Pulitzer) seems like a perfectly reasonable thing to put off.

*Saturday:* The next morning is better. Breakfasts, for the majority who get up early, are boisterous and cheerful and feature made-to-order plates of pancakes, bacon, and deliciously fresh eggs. (The chicken coop is roughly 15 yards away.) I eat more pancakes than seems possible.

I learn that there are six other fiction writers, six composers, four visual artists, two playwrights, two screenwriters, an absurdly young memoirist, a nonfiction writer, a choreographer, and an interdisciplinary artist—a woman from Michigan/Berlin who combines visual art with cultural

work—currently in residence. I begin memorizing names.

After dinner, a composer gives a presentation of his work, playing recordings of two chamber ensembles written for both classical instruments and baroque strings. I overhear a novelist asking the nonfiction writer about horses; her novel is set in the early 20th century, and she's trying to establish the right details for the horse scenes. The nonfiction writer has been reporting on the horse world for most of her career. Another



*Where Thornton Wilder wrote 'Our Town'*

novelist and I swap names of favorite authors. Horse talk is in the air, and I recommend a book by Peter Carey. She suggests Jane Smiley. Someone warns us about deer ticks. A painter complains about the lunch.

*A few days later:* Most of an artist's time is spent alone. In my studio, there is just my messy 41,000-word manuscript and me. The writing I did back home was mad-dash/first-draft desperation: I wrote 700 words a day until something in a scene got stuck, then I stopped and wrote another outline. Now, six outlines later, I'm trying to decide exactly how this thing begins. One character seduces another, but I can't work out which. I try writing the opening chapter one way, then throw it out and start over.

Outside, I hear chickadees and juncos. I get up, look out. In the meadow, I see a flock of wild turkeys. A look

through my binoculars confirms it: turkeys. Seven turkeys.

Windows are a hazard. I close every single curtain in my studio. I sit back down. I work.

*Night:* Half a week, and I've lost track of the dates. The moon is at its nadir, and the woods are so dark I cannot see my hands. My studio is a live-in, built in 1909 and originally intended for married couples. It has a double-sided fireplace that faces two identical rooms, one of which I sleep in, one in which I write. It's about a 20-minute hike from

Colony Hall, where breakfast and dinner are served, and unless I can beg a ride, I must walk home in the dark. The very dark.

The flashlight I've brought is appropriate for a New York City power outage, not the woods. It has two double-A batteries that give out as I'm walking on the darkest road. Not only can I not see my hand in front of my face, I also can't see the break in the low stone wall that marks the beginning of the dirt road that leads me home.

I miss it. I walk in the pitch-dark until I see the faint glow of a streetlight in the distance. I stop.

I stand there on the dark road trying to remember whether I'm supposed to pass a streetlight on my way. I'm not. I've never seen this light before. I must turn back. I cannot see. I smack my flashlight until it emits a pale orange smudge of light. I point it at the wall—I can just make out the outlines of glacially rounded, mossy stones—and when the wall vanishes, I turn.

*Three nights later:* Now armed with a Maglite that's heavy enough to beat a rioter into submission and powered by three brand-new D-cell batteries, I hear a rustling in the woods. Several colonists have recently encountered bears while wandering the colony's 450 acres, and though I know that black bears are harmless—more afraid of me than I ought to be of them—I am frightened. The rustling

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gets louder. I point my flashlight at the flaming autumn trees and see absolutely nothing.

I'm very far from civilization—almost back to my studio now, and not near any other studio that's inhabited at night. I'm so scared I crouch. The rustling does not stop. It's coming toward me. It's not a bear, I tell myself; it's Sasquatch. And then I see it: A small, dark animal climbing out of the woods and onto the raised dirt road. A porcupine.

Only when I'm close enough to blind him does he seem to notice me. He stops, quills up, and looks over his shoulder. Anthropomorphic projection: He appears mildly disgusted and annoyed.

*Possibly a Friday:* We know it's the weekend because the cook has changed. It's taco night. After dinner, I head over to the library to print a few pages of a story. I like this story, but the beginning isn't right. I lay the pages in a semicircle around me on the floor, look at each section, then stoop to draw circles around paragraphs that might need to be moved or deleted.

It's a house of cards: Take one piece out, and the whole thing falls. I let out a few exasperated sighs. At some point another writer enters—the library is a good place to avoid the after-dinner social hour without being entirely alone—but he pays me no mind, and I don't mind him. I keep drawing lines and sighing. For a while I just sit there, brooding, face buried in my hands.

The next morning, I decide what the story needs. On my walk to breakfast I encounter a coyote. For a moment, we both stand and stare. Then, as if showing me a magic trick, he disappears.

*Some day toward the last:* There are multiple requirements for admission to the MacDowell Colony (work samples, personal statements, letters of recommendation, CVs) but no restrictions on the art produced while in residence. One must not damage the facilities or disturb other colonists, but like the motto of New Hampshire ("Live Free or Die") and the motto of the colony itself ("Giving Artists Freedom to

Create"), once an artist arrives here, no one will interfere. MacDowell does not require any proof of output; nor does it perform checks on what colonists are doing in their studios while in residence. On my application, I stated that I needed the time to finish a story collection; during my residency I worked mainly on a novel.

If a sculptor or architect or composer wants to spend her day pacing around her studio, muttering to herself and hurling curses at the gods, she can. If a writer throws her notebooks across the room in a fit of childish vexation (I'm speaking hypothetically, of course), no one is going to pop his head in to ask if she's okay. You can cry all you want. Sleep all you want. Write or paint or play the piano at triple-F *fortissimo* all night, every night—and then do it again the next day.

So what *does* go on in the studios at MacDowell? A lot of work, from what I have observed. Colonists aren't permitted to visit one another's studios without an invitation, but the ques-

tion at dinner every night is, "How'd work go today?" Everyone I heard who was asked this question gave what sounded like an honest answer: "Pretty good. I wrote my thousand words," or "Awful. I spent all morning rewriting a paragraph, then deleted it this afternoon."

A sculptor speaks of a few hours spent just looking at her work, lining it up across her studio and thinking about it in a way she never gave herself the time to do back home. An orchestral composer tells me about devoting an entire morning to a piece of music she couldn't end, then indulging in a nap and hearing the rest of the piece in a dream. A writer from Kansas City boasts of producing an astonishing 80,000 words in her three weeks at MacDowell, and a painter opens her studio near the end of her stay to reveal more newly painted canvases than she'd finished in the entire preceding year.

We all stand around admiring them, amazed. ♦



# Lives of the Scribes

*What you thought you knew about  
the Washington press corps.* BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

**O**n the strength of half-a-century's work with newspaper people, I can confidently say that no cadre of that tribe is subject to greater superstition than Washington reporters. It seems a settled prejudice that all reporters, everywhere, are puffed-up Pulitzer-seekers and partisans in disguise, prostituting themselves for glittering prizes. Assuredly, journalists are no more immune to mean ambitions than anyone else. But I

*Edwin M. Yoder Jr. is the author, most recently, of* Vacancy: A Judicial Misadventure.

## Whatever Happened to the Washington Reporters

1978-2012

by Stephen Hess

Brookings, 216 pp., \$29.95

routinely challenge these skeptics to spend a night in a busy newsroom, or face a gruff copy editor of the old school (a vanishing breed, alas), and still believe that news is easy to cook, especially when it is big and breaking.

In fact, it is too often served raw. When this writer was a cub reporter in Charlotte, assigned to cover the nightly mayhem in the streets, I presented to

the copy desk on one of my first days a piece about the “lacerations and contusions” suffered in a highway accident. “Sonny,” barked a hard-faced copy editor, “here in America we call ‘em cuts and bruises.” I had stumbled unwarily into the hospital-speak of my sources.

In any case, those who seek the straight stuff on these alleged fabulists, these journalistic unicorns, will profit

There are interesting tales. It is, or was, familiar lore that the late James Reston of the *New York Times*, surely the most eminent Washington reporter of the postwar generation, created his own domain as the paper’s chief capital Correspondent (capital “C,” please) and resisted home-office efforts to control it. The story of the hiring of young Steven Roberts, who seems to have wanted to work for the

covering the Supreme Court for NBC:

The principal producer to whom I reported in New York [had] very strong views as to what she thought the Court was doing, which occasionally did parallel what the Court was doing, but not all the time. . . . She would change my copy. . . . Frequently it reached the point where I didn’t believe half the things I was saying on the air. Not that it was blatantly false but that it was inaccurate.

Stern, protesting, was admonished by a senior producer that what mattered was not the “fairness bullshit,” but being “fair overall.” Stern fled to academe. Fred Graham had a similar problem as judicial reporter at CBS, where the term “infotainment” seems to have been bandied without irony. CBS News chief Van Gordon Sauter advised Graham, who was handicapped by a law degree, that the reporter should seek, in every story, “a tear-filled moment, a happy moment, anyway an emotional moment . . . and your rating will go up.”

No doubt, covering judicial subtleties is a challenge for a visual medium that must tell stories in pictures and “feelings” elicited from desolate people. It seems widely believed today that this imaginary judiciary of sob sisters (and brothers) may be swayed by demonstrators; and since many people claim to get their news from television, that idea may be encouraged by the theatrical values urged upon Stern and Graham (and no doubt others). But the disturbing effect is a grossly distorted impression of what judges decide, and how.

Of special interest is the space devoted here to that *ur*-Washington institution, the Gridiron Club, which has been staging winter follies in a white-tie setting for well over a century. These annual events feature pointed skits teasing presidents and other political bigwigs, who are expected to attend, laugh, and retort. For a very long time, the evening’s follies opened with a reminder that “ladies are present,” meaning presumably that locker-room humor was out of order. But of all the recent indicia of journalistic

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*Jimmy Carter meets the press, 1977.*

from Stephen Hess’s longitudinal study. Three decades ago, he and his assistants interviewed as many of the species as they could track down, more than 400, and published a book about them. Now, 30 years later, the Hess team has reviewed its findings and tried to discover what became of their subjects. The results are interesting, although the data are mostly such as can be neatly tabulated. The arguably more interesting personal questions—parental influences and mentors, reading habits, musical tastes, and the like—aren’t sought, and the favored categories are generational and professional, and male/female. The names of stars and prestige papers naturally get more exposure than the also-rans, although the categories (“boomers,” “lifers,” and so on) are impersonal; and there is a handy appendix in which the 1978 interviewees appear.

*Times* since he could walk and talk, confirms it. When the editors in New York balked at hiring Roberts, then 22, and Reston’s successor as bureau chief, Tom Wicker, had trouble breaking the home-office blockade, Reston took control. Roberts recounts:

[Roberts and Reston] walked out of 1701 K Street, where our office was, got into a cab, went to National Airport, flew to New York, marched into the office of the managing editor, Clifton Daniel, and Reston said, “Are you going to hire this kid or not?” At which point Daniel said, “OK, OK!” That’s how I became a reporter on the *New York Times* at 22.

On the other hand, reporters who enter the gilded world of television news, especially those who cover courts, clearly have the hardest time getting their stories through the electronic fog and frivolity. That problem finally got to Carl Stern, who had been

change, none is more startling or symptomatic of what has befallen old-boy networks than the recent advent of Susan Page of *USA Today* as the Gridiron's fifth female and first baby boomer president.

Even more revolutionary has been the dilution of the so-called pencil press by members from TV—though one hopes not the clowning producers who drove Stern and Graham out of reporting. It was Page, in her presidential “speech in the dark,” who marked another transition in her tribute to David Broder, the dean of recent political reporters, who had died four days before the Gridiron dinner in February 2011: “He embodied the values of thoughtful and civil engagement on the most critical issues we face as a nation.” It was true, and more good things could be said of Broder. But one quality especially marked him as exceptional in a thin-skinned trade: He usually devoted his last *Washington Post* column every year to a critique of his own errors and oversights.

My own unscientific survey of the reportorial species would include another institution overlooked here, the Sperling breakfast, long convened by Godfrey Sperling, chief Washington correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*—perhaps because it so often could have been described as the Gridiron with bacon and eggs. On weekday mornings, in one hotel eatery or another, one would find an assemblage of many eminent reporters and correspondents—often the aforementioned Broder and also Robert Novak, the equally brilliant political reporter who posed, in his later years, as the “prince of darkness,” and loved the role so much that he almost believed in it. Sperling could draw administration and congressional eminences for an hour of on-the-record questions and answers.

So far as I recall from my own time at Sperling's friendly table, few sensations emerged—not even when Bill Clinton, as a candidate in 1992, was asked toward the end of the hour about his rumored dalliances. (“I thought you'd never ask,” Clinton replied, but

spilled no beans.) Though there was the weird morning, in the second Reagan term, when Admiral John Poindexter, the new, naïve national security adviser, was summoned to the White House mid-breakfast. Naturally, we wondered what agenda couldn't wait another 30 minutes. It was shortly surmised that the official line

on the recent Reykjavik summit with Mikhail Gorbachev was under overhaul, and what had been perceived as a flop was about to be reclothed as the coming millennium.

In fact, as is noted by Hess, Poindexter had let it out that one of his functions was to blow smoke at the press. His tenure was brief. ♦



# Testament of Youth

*The elder brother of Charles I, in pictures and memory.*

BY SARA LODGE

**H**enry IX is one of the most interesting monarchs Britain never had.

The eldest son of James VI of Scotland and his wife, Anne of Denmark, Henry, who was born in 1594, took after his mother in looks. He had a long, chiseled face with intelligent eyes, a long nose, and a small, determined chin. Agile and athletic—he loved to practice feats of skill with the pike and lance—he also showed considerable interest in hydraulics and other scientific advances, enthusiastically backed exploration of the New World, and was a patron of the arts whose remarkable collection of paintings included works by Breugel the Elder, Rubens, and Titian.

If he had lived longer, it is tempting to wonder whether he might have done better than his younger brother Charles I at negotiating with Parliament, forestalling unpopular taxes, adopting a firmly Protestant role in Europe, and thus avoiding the Civil War that signed the death warrant for the British monarchy until Cromwell's early demise without an obvious political heir provided an opportunity for its restoration.

Sara Lodge, a senior lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews, is the author of *Thomas Hood and Nineteenth-Century Poetry: Work, Play, and Politics*.

## The Lost Prince

*The Life & Death of Henry Stuart*  
National Portrait Gallery, London

London's National Portrait Gallery exhibition devoted to images of Henry and his circle is a dazzling show. Ruling in the 16th century was all about display: Power had to be made manifest, glory rendered visible. As James VI explained in the advice book he wrote for his son, *Basilikon Doron*, “The people that see you not within, cannot judge of you but according to the outward appearance of your actions and companie, which only is subject to their sight.” The costume and trappings of royalty were all-important in projecting the role that the king and his family sought to play. It was the heir apparent's job to *represent* the virtues and splendors of national strength.

The portraits of Henry as a young man are remarkably consistent in portraying his features, but they are also allegories of his potential. In one masterpiece by Robert Peake, Henry is depicted in splendid hunting attire, standing over a dead stag. His sword is raised above his head, ready to plunge into the beast's carcass. In the iconography of the time,



his attitude is also that of the Archangel Michael, or St. George, about to slay the dragon. Henry is clad in green: the color of hunting, but also, in Renaissance symbolism, of hope. The picture is, to a degree, naturalistic—Henry loved hunting and horsemanship—but it is also clearly a hopeful depiction of a future leader, one who (perhaps) might not shy away from war with Catholic Spain as his father had done.

In another portrait, Prince Henry is mounted on a horse, and an old man, probably representing Time, is following his progress, his forelock tied to Henry's pennant. The detail with which armor, clothing, and jewelry are depicted in these paintings is a miracle of workmanship. You can see the very gold threads in Henry's embroidered doublets, the diamonds on the cuff of his glove, the filigree filaments of lace in his ruff, the embroidered carnations and forget-me-nots in the bodice of his mother's ivory silk gown.

Diplomats often looked for signs of foreign policy in the origin of the textiles and ornaments that the royal family favored. The cut of one's cloth might well signal the cast of one's political mind. James VI and his family spent massively on jewelry: Henry's bills amounted to three or four thousand pounds at a time. In these extraordinary, jewel-like paintings, one can see the royal family presented itself as a kind of intricate crown, sparkling with gems and glittering with promise. (Children at the exhibition were fascinated by the shoe buckles, some of them like many-pointed, layered starfish inset with pearls. A return of these to high fashion seems long overdue.)

Included as well are various artifacts that offer a fascinating insight into the education of a prince in the late 16th century. Henry was born in Scotland and was, according to Scottish custom, sent away shortly after his birth to live with the Earl of

Mar and to be schooled in the ways of princely virtue. His mother was understandably devastated, and we can see from the earliest days a contest between competing influences for Henry's attention.

James VI was very specific about the instruction he wanted his son to have. It was principally a moral



*Prince Henry Stuart by Isaac Oliver, ca. 1612*

education, with emphasis placed on sound religious observance and physical training. James encouraged fencing, wrestling, tennis, and archery, but forbade "all rumling violent exercises, as the football." He wanted Henry to have book-learning, but felt that scholarly excellence was not the business of a king.

Henry evidently strove to please his father: There are rather poignant examples of his efforts to improve his handwriting. But he would turn into a very different man. James VI expressed himself chiefly in middle Scots; Henry was the first true Scottish-Britannic heir, with close access both to trusted Calvinist Scottish courtiers and to English scholars, nobles, and military men. The evidence suggests that he would have been more active

in military exploits than his father and a more zealous Protestant than his younger brother. Even as a teenager, he instituted swearing-boxes amongst his courtiers, the proceeds from which, collected as a result of ill-considered oaths, would be given to charity.

Everything about Henry's brief life suggests his awareness that alliances needed to be forged. Scotland and England had been estranged, not least by the execution of the Roman Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots (Henry's grandmother) by her English cousin, Elizabeth. An uneasy truce subsisted in religious matters that might at any time flare into conflict.

A leadership cohort of young men from different noble factions was built around Henry. Meanwhile, judicious potential marriages with French or Savoyard princesses were sought. The cultural sophistication of the court is demonstrated by the numerous plays and masques, by writers including Ben Jonson, in which Henry and his mother often acted parts that tended to promote Arthurian chivalry and visions of peaceful union.

It wasn't to be. Henry's death still makes sad reading. A few months before his nineteenth birthday, he came down with a terrible fever. The horrors of the illness were doubtless compounded by the treatment: clysters (enemas), as well as the application of a dead pigeon to his head and a split chicken to his feet. The account of the autopsy means we now know what killed Henry: typhus. Renaissance medicine could not save him.

The wooden effigy that was carried atop his funeral bier is a pathetic sight: The wax head and hands have been lost. Even in death, the prince must be rendered visible to give his people a focus for their mourning.

The 17th century would not prove to be an easy time to reign. Henry was a model prince who, luckily and unluckily, never had to test his mettle by becoming king.

# All In Good Time

*The key to success is getting around to it, eventually.*

BY BARTON SWAIM

Before reading it, I had already decided to dislike this book. I had assumed, incorrectly, that it must be another clever panegyric on something traditionally thought of as a vice. I've grown weary of volumes purporting to reveal the hidden virtues of (to recall a few works from the last decade or so) hypocrisy, bitchiness, gossip, divorce, and melancholy. At their best, these kinds of books can make us reexamine pejorative words and concepts—Adam Bellow's *In Defense of Nepotism* did that for me—but by and large they are little more than clever perversity.

*The Art of Procrastination* sounds as if it would be in this tradition, but it is not. John Perry's aim isn't to sing the praises of procrastination or to enumerate ways to "dawdle" or "lollygag" more effectively; in his view, procrastination is often (though not always) a bad thing. Instead, he wants to tell procrastinators that they aren't the lazy slugs they often think they are; indeed, they're not procrastinators at all, at least not in the way they think. Which makes sense: The lazy man doesn't reprove himself for procrastinating.

Perry prefers the term "structured procrastination" to describe what most of us do naturally. It's not that we're lazy. People often think of us as industrious. And rightly so: We produce a lot. But there's always some important task that, despite our best intentions, we seem incapable of completing. Eventually we get to it, usually late; but by that time it's been replaced, at least in our minds, by some new thing we'll spend the next

Barton Swaim is the author of *Scottish Men of Letters and the New Public Sphere: 1802-1834*.

## The Art of Procrastination

*A Guide to Effective Dawdling, Lollygagging and Postponing*

by John Perry  
Workman, 112 pp., \$12.95

several months admonishing ourselves for not doing.

Perry's idea is that structured procrastinators do lots of things as ways of *not* doing other things. I clean the gutters and sweep the driveway because, as long as I'm doing so, I won't get around to filling out that questionnaire for the neighborhood association. I'm writing this now because, if I don't, I'm going to have to write a critique of a friend's short story, which I agreed to do months ago but which I badly want not to do.

What's needed, says Perry, is self-deception. When you compose your list of things to do—and he urges a daily, detailed list, including things you should avoid, e.g., "Do not google Meg Ryan"—make your top-priority items things that you don't want to do but must do. If you're a structured procrastinator, you will avoid doing your top priority items by accomplishing lots of significant but second-level priority items. Then one of two things will happen: Either your yet-undone top-priority item will be superseded by a more important item, in which case you will accomplish it while avoiding your new top-priority item, or the original top-priority item will disappear.

The real genius of Perry's idea is that it takes advantage of the fact that many "time sensitive" responsibilities foisted on us really aren't that "time sensitive" at all—and, indeed, a substantial proportion of them will vanish before we get around to dealing with

them. Which is why, as Perry points out, you should always populate the top of your list with things that (a) seem to have clear deadlines but don't, and (b) seem to be important but aren't.

Perry is a professor emeritus of philosophy at Stanford, and I am inclined to think that the demands placed on professors of philosophy are slightly more flexible than those placed on other people who work for a living. Still, he makes an excellent point. A complex and highly bureaucratic economy such as ours imposes an insane number of small deadlines on its adult population—which reminds me, the permission slip for my daughter's field trip is due tomorrow—and one can easily forget that these deadlines aren't all moral obligations. To put it another way: You have no responsibility to maximize the comfort and convenience of life's innumerable deadline-setters.

The trick, writes Perry, is to make the right sorts of things your ostensible "priorities." For example, renewing your driver's license—hard deadline, real consequences for letting it pass—should never be at the top of your list. As a general rule, don't put any government agency to the test; make the trek out to the DMV as a way of avoiding some other "important" chore. Many deadlines in the private sector, by contrast, are far more fluid than the tough-sounding rhetoric with which they're announced. I don't like to mention them by name; you know the ones I mean.

One small complaint: Perry is a genial writer, but he couldn't pass up the temptation to remind readers that he is a good, right-thinking liberal. The snide quip, for example, about wanting to avoid "any [television] program involving Paris Hilton or Glenn Beck doing anything whatsoever" isn't even funny—and hardly worth putting off the hundreds of thousands of Glenn Beck watchers (or even Paris Hilton admirers) who might enjoy this book.

Still, *The Art of Procrastination* is a fun, easy read and its chief idea will assuage the guilty feelings of many a procrastinator. It would have made a perfect Christmas gift. Unfortunately, I didn't get around to writing this until after Christmas. Sorry. ♦



**"With all due respect, the fact is we had four dead Americans. Was it because of a protest, or was it because of guys out for a walk one night who decided they'd go kill some Americans? What difference, at this point, does it make?"**

**—Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, January 23, 2013**

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# Bill Clinton asks wife Hillary, 'What difference *does* it make?'

## SECRETARY NOT AMUSED

*Former president  
hails wife's testimony*

BY ANNE GEARAN

Former president Bill Clinton says he couldn't be prouder of his wife, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, for refusing to be bullied by Congress. He especially shares the secretary's sentiments during the questioning about Benghazi. "When Hill asked that poor senator, 'What difference, at this point, does it make?' I just about fell over," Mr. Clinton said with a laugh. "Because I often feel exactly the same way."

Last Thursday night near Chapqua, the former president lost control of his vehicle and ran into a ditch, requiring the aid of a tow truck. When Mrs. Clinton asked how it happened, Mr. Clinton replied, "Was it because a wild animal suddenly came across my path, or was it because I was gorging on a mouthwatering Taco Bell Doritos Locos Taco Supreme? What difference, at this point, does it make?"



Bill Clinton anticipates singer Kelly Clarkson's performance at the presidential inauguration, January 21.

Over the weekend, Mr. Clinton informed his wife that someone had stolen his credit card number. When the secretary asked where it could have occurred, the former president replied, "What difference, at this point, does it make if the card number was copied at Applebee's or from inside the champagne room at the Spearmint Rhino gentlemen's club in Las Vegas? A crime has been committed."

Yesterday, it was reported that Mrs. Clinton had discovered one of her husband's dress shirts in

the washing machine and that it smelled of ladies' perfume—not hers. "Honestly," pleaded Mr. Clinton, "what difference does it make if I bumped into a saleswoman who accidentally doused my shirt with perfume or if she rubbed her naked perfumed body all over me in a hotel room? The fact is, the shirt needed to be washed."

When reached for comment, Mrs. Clinton said she should have relieved her husband of his

**EXCUSES CONTINUED ON A4**

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FEBRUARY 4, 2013